

# PLUCK AND LUCK

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## DICK DUNCAN; OR THE BLIGHT OF THE BOWL. A TEMPERANCE STORY BY JOHN B. DOWD.



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## DICK DUNCAN;

OR,

## THE BLIGHT OF THE BOWL.

By JNO. B. DOWD.

### PART I.

#### THE PROLOGUE.

"Rap—rap—rap!"

The dull leaden sounds penetrate the grated window of a criminal's cell.

"Rap—rap—rap!"

The gaunt shadow of the gallows falls across the yard in front of the cell window.

"Rap—rap—rap!"

And the gibbet from which the doomed man is to swing into eternity slowly arises into shape, as if to mock the pallid face at the window.

"Rap—rap—rap!"

The young man behind the grated window shuddered as each blow of the hammer fell like the knell of fate on his heart.

His eyes were fastened on the horrible instrument of death. He could not turn away.

An irresistible fascination held him there.

"Rap—rap—rap!"

His counsel entered the cell.

His presence broke the spell.

"My poor friend," he said, "what more can I do for you? Command me and your last wishes shall be——"

"Rap—rap—rap!"

"The last nail is driven!" gasped the doomed young man, sinking down on the prison bed and burying his white face in his hands; "you can—do—no—more!"

The lawyer gazed at his doomed client in profound silence, while his great heart swelled in sympathy for him in his untimely fate.

"Rap!" clear and sharp.

It was the signal of the executioner.

But a few minutes more of life remained.

The young man staggered to his feet, and gasping, "It is the blight of the bowl!" staggered forward and fell into the outstretched arms of his counsel.

### CHAPTER I.

#### THE LOVERS—A VILLAINOUS PLOT.

It was sunset in the quiet little village of Swandown on the Hudson, and many of the good people were returning from their places of business to the cottage homes, where peace, plenty and comfort awaited them. The scene was one of surpassing beauty as earth and sky and water seemed to blend in perfect harmony to make one of Nature's masterly pictures. Every street in the village was shaded by tall, stately trees, and luxurious vegetation waved on every side. The Hudson rolled grandly by on its way to the sea, bearing on its broad bosom the fortunes of many, and beyond the Catskills reared their lofty heads in lordly grandeur.

Along one of the shady streets of Swandown on this lovely evening, almost hidden by the deep foliage of fruit trees bending over the fence with their heavy loads of delicious fruit, might have been seen a young couple, arm in arm, slowly wending their way toward a vine-clad cottage near the river.

The young man was handsome and manly-looking, and known by everybody in Swandown as "Honest" Dick Duncan. He was just one-and-twenty, and the future never seemed so promising to him as then. And no wonder! For the beautiful maiden by his side had just said "Yes," to a question he had propounded. Leonie Medill was the belle of the village, and many other young men vainly tried to persuade her to speak that soft, sweet word to them. But "Honest" Dick Duncan had won her young heart, and she was only too happy to promise to be his wife whenever he was ready to claim her.

They lingered at the cottage gate as though loath to part, and many were the tender words they whispered!

"You will wait patiently, darling," he said, as he held her hand in his, "until another year, when our happiness will be complete?"

"Yes, dear Dick," she murmured, "I would wait for you through all eternity. My heart is all your own. You will write me every day, will you not?"



"Yes, and sometimes twice a day," said he, laughingly. "But you must not undertake to live on love."

"No, I will not," she replied, "but I almost believe I could," and those sweet, liquid brown eyes of hers attested the sincerity of her words.

"Maybe you could, darling," said Dick, laughing and kissing her blushing cheek in the gathering twilight; "but you would grow thin. I want a live, plump and solid little angel for a wife." And, pressing her hand again, he turned away and walked rapidly toward the upper part of the village.

"There he goes," whispered one of two well-dressed men on the other side of the street, a block above the cottage home of Leonie Medill; "the only obstacle between us and our fortune."

"Yes, and he has been with pretty Leonie again. I tell you, Jared, they must not be allowed to marry."

"I wish I knew whether or not they are engaged," said the other, looking back at the little vine-clad cottage where Leonie was still standing at the gate, gazing after her lover.

"I am quite sure they will be if they are not now," said the one addressed as Jared, "for they are both good-looking and evidently very fond of each other. She will not refuse him if he proposes."

"It must be prevented at all hazards," almost hissed the other, "for that would be the destruction of our hopes."

"True; but how are we to help ourselves?" Jared asked.

"I don't know, but it must be done."

"But we must not be known in anything that does it."

"Of course. Aunt Huldah cannot last two years longer. If she is out of the way and leaves no heirs, we will inherit her fortune."

"Yes, we are the only heirs that would be left. But how are we to get rid of him?" the other asked, as they walked arm in arm along the street.

"That must be devised in some way. Dick Duncan shall not inherit all of Aunt Huldah's fortune."

Jared and Joseph Harkins were two brothers engaged in business in Swandown. They were also cousins of Dick Duncan, and on very friendly terms with him. But, unlike Dick, they had made quite a start in life by reason of close economy and penurious habits. Yet genial Dick was the more popular, and had a host of friends.

They watched him until he entered the house where he was boarding, and then they turned away and went in another direction.

"Joe," said Jared, as the two brothers wended their way through the streets of the village, "you must stay at the store and let me have several weeks' holiday."

"Why, what's that for?"

"I want to work up the hill to Aunt Huldah's fortune."

Joe looked at his brother as though he had a right to further explanations. Jared looked cautiously around in the gathering twilight, as if fearful of being overheard by some wandering villager, and then, clutching his brother's arm, whispered:

"I have a scheme that will work out just as we could wish. I am going to lead Dick Duncan into bad company, get drunk with him, and let Aunt Huldah think that we are both going to the dogs, and that you are the only safe one after all. If she should die before he does, she might alter her will in your favor, which would be all we want. If he dies first the coast will be clear for us, you see, as the only heirs."

"Why not get some one to——"

"Hush—sh! don't say it," quickly interrupted Jared. "We would be forever in that man's power after that, and he would bleed us to death. Maybe he might get sick and make a death-bed confession which would ruin us, you see. No, we won't take a living soul into our confidence, nor have any man's blood on our hands. There are many chances of his getting killed in New York city on sprees which we will take together."

"But won't you be in the same danger, too?" Joseph Harkins asked.

"No; I will be playing a part all the time, and be on my guard while he will not. You know my will power and tenacity of purpose. There is no need of fear for me."

"But suppose he won't drink?"

"I won't suppose it, for he is human like the rest of mankind. There are situations where the most uncompromising temperance men fall in spite of their principles;" and the two brothers, having reached their hotel, changed the conversation and entered the house.

## CHAPTER II.

### THE VILLAIN AT WORK.

The house in which Dick Duncan was a clerk sent him down to the city on important business nearly every week. Such was their confidence in his integrity and good judgment, that they frequently intrusted large sums of money to his charge, to be paid to wholesale houses in the city with whom they traded. He was frequently sent down to purchase certain lines of goods, and he invariably gave perfect satisfaction in every transaction. In another year he would probably be admitted as a member of the firm.

Jared Harkins frequently met Dick down in the city, and they would often dine together. But while Jared would sometimes indulge in the luxury of a glass of wine, Dick was noticed to be a total abstainer from intoxicants of every description.

Being on good cousinly terms with young Duncan, Jared Harkins found little difficulty in ascertaining when he would again visit the city.

"Why, how singular!" he exclaimed; "I am going down the same day."

"Glad to hear it," said Dick. "We can go down together."

"Yes, and see some of the place before we return," suggested Jared.

"I don't think I will have any leisure time for that," was the reply.

"Oh, I guess you can if we go early and push things," said Jared. "I've got a great deal to do myself, but I make it a rule to do what I have to do quickly."

"Well, I'll try and see if I can't follow your rule," remarked Dick, laughing good-naturedly. "I wouldn't mind having a half day's holiday down there."

"Get everything ready, then, for an early start, and we'll make it without any trouble."

On the morning of the day they were to start for the city the two cousins were at the train at an early hour, and were soon on their way to the metropolis.

"I have more time that we can spend around town than I had hoped for," said Dick, as the train whizzed southward along the side of the deep rolling Hudson. "I can have the whole day for this business."

"Good! Then we can take in the matinee at Niblo's, and some other place at night," said Jared Harkins, his face beaming with delight.

"I don't know that I can stand the expense, Jared," said Dick, looking a little grave. "I am trying to save up a certain sum of money for a certain purpose, and don't see how——"

"Oh, the tickets won't cost us anything," said Jared, in an off-hand kind of way.

Dick looked surprised.

"How do you manage that?" he asked.

"Oh, there's a lot of good fellows at the store where I trade, who always have tickets to the various theatres for their customers," and Jared gave him an honest gaze as he spoke. "Don't the houses you trade with do that way?"

"No. They sometimes ask me to drink, but I never drink,



you know. You see, I am not a customer of the house you trade with."

"Oh, that doesn't matter. I can get tickets for any of my friends, besides."

"But I don——"

"Oh, never mind what you think about it," interrupted Jared. "They hand me tickets, and sometimes one of the salesmen goes with me. It's all right for one gentleman to ask another to go to theatres with him, so you've got to go."

"Well, I s'pose it's all right," said Dick, after a pause; though you ought to let them know I am nothing but a clerk, instead of a merchant who might be persuaded to become a customer."

"Ha-ha-ha!" laughed Jared; "why, bless your honest soul, the clerks are the very ones they seek to make friends of their house. Every friend in the employ of a merchant is so much in their favor."

"How so?" and Dick again looked grave.

"Why, a simple suggestion from a clerk frequently induces a merchant to change his wholesale dealer and buy of other houses."

"Ah!" and Dick seemed to be relieved of something that had made his face look serious.

"You see," continued Jared, "they go upon the theory that a man must make his living off his friends. His enemies won't trade with him, you know."

"Yes, that's true. The most friends in the trade the most customers, of course."

They were soon at the Grand Central depot and took a stage downtown. Both went to the houses where they had business, agreeing to meet at a restaurant at noon, to dine and then go to the theatre.

"I guess I can manage him," said Jared Harkins to himself as he strolled off uptown again, after parting with Dick Duncan. "I have no business to transact here to-day, except with you, Cousin Dick Duncan, and you may rest assured I will try to transact that with credit and profit to myself. I'll go and see about those tickets, and then be at the restaurant in time for lunch. I think he likes fun as much as anyone I know, and I am going to see that he gets it."

At the office of the theatre Jared Harkins purchased two tickets for reserved seats in the most eligible part of the house.

"Would you like to see where the seats are, sir?" the gentlemanly ticket agent asked.

"Yes, I wouldn't mind taking a look at them," was the reply.

"Show the gentleman the seats," said the agent to one of the ushers who was near by.

"This way, sir," said the usher, promptly, leading the way inside.

Jared followed him into the magnificent temple of Thespis and saw the seats.

"They will do very well," he said, and then he looked around at about a score of young women and a few men who were present in the body of the auditorium.

The young women were chattering gaily, and from their manners and conversation he judged that they belonged to the ballet. He was right, and a more mischievous lot of young women it would be difficult to find elsewhere.

Two sparkling, black-eyed beauties approached him as he stood looking at the drop curtain.

"You are making choice of seats, sir?" one of them asked.

"Yes. I have just bought two seats," he replied, "just over there," pointing to the two seats he held tickets for.

The girls looked at the numbers of the tickets.

"Couldn't you get nearer the stage?" one of them asked.

"I don't know; I didn't try," he said. "What difference does it make?"

"Send out and get some beer," said the other, laughingly, "and I'll tell you."

"Oh, you will, eh? Well, who will go for the beer?"

"We'll send the stage carpenter's boy," said the other, quickly. "Come back to the green-room, and we can have a table and glasses."

This was something new to Jared Harkins, and as he had over two hours of leisure time on his hands he quietly followed the two gay young dancers back behind the scenes, where there was a table, chairs and glasses. A party had evidently been drinking there only a few minutes before, as the foam of beer was still on the glasses.

"Here, Billy," said the taller of the two girls, "run out and get another pitcher of beer," and the boy came forward with a large pitcher his hand.

Jared gave him a half dollar, and he darted out like a shot.

"Now take a seat and wait for the beer," said Nellie, the taller girl, seating herself by the side of her victim.

"You were never behind the scenes before, sir, were you?" Alice, the shorter, asked, as he seated himself between them.

"This is the first time," he replied.

"I thought so," and the two girls laughed good-naturedly. "We had a reporter in here just now, and made him set up the beer before we would answer a single question."

"Indeed! And do you make everybody set up the beer who comes in here?"

"Whenever a gentleman comes in during the day we levy the contribution," was the laughing reply. "Here comes the beer, foaming like the sea in a storm—here, fill my glass first, Billy!" and the wayward beauty held her glass toward the foaming pitcher, with an eager look in her sparkling black eyes.

### CHAPTER III.

#### YIELDING TO TEMPTATION.

The carpenter's boy filled the glasses for the two girls, and then turned to Harkins and filled his, which was on the table before him.

"Here's a smile for you, sir," said Nellie, holding her glass to her lips.

"And here's a glance," added Alice, holding her glass so she could just peep over at him.

"Thanks, ladies," he responded. "My respects and best wishes," and then all three drained their glasses to the dregs.

"That's good; fill 'em up again, Billy," said Nellie, holding her empty glass under the pitcher again.

The boy filled all three glasses again, and then Alice asked:

"Won't you tell us your name, sir?"

"My name is Harkins."

"And mine is Nellie, and this is Alice. Now we are acquainted, aren't we?" and the sparkling young dancer gave a merry, silvery laugh that rang through the immense building.

"Oh, yes," said Jared, "and I hope we may have the pleasure of meeting again."

"Of course. Couldn't you have a supper for us to-night after the performance? It would be so nice, you know."

A thought flashed through the scheming brain of Jared Harkins at that moment, which made him start as if stung.

"Yes," he said, "I will give you an elegant supper and plenty of champagne, if you will agree to induce a friend, who will come with me, to drink some of the wine."

"Of course we will," they both exclaimed. "Is it a lady or gentleman?"

"A young friend—a cousin of mine. He is all right, likes fun, but won't drink wine or beer."

"Just leave him to me," said Nellie, "and I'll get him as full as a lord."

"Then I'll have everything ready by the time the performance is over. Where shall we meet?"



"Meet us at the stage door when we come out. We will go then to the restaurant direct."

"Very well. I shall depend on you," said Jared, "but remember, you are to say nothing of my bargain about his drinking."

"Of course not. Just leave us alone for that."

They drank another glass of the beer, and then he arose to leave. He looked hard at the boy with the pitcher, hoping that imperturbable youth would remember to return the change of the beer money. But Billy didn't look up at him. He saw something in the bottom of the pitcher that was an interesting study to him.

Placing the change mentally on the loss account, he turned away and walked out of the building, consulting his watch as he went.

"Why, hanged if it isn't time to meet him at lunch!" and without loss of time he hastened downtown to a Broadway restaurant, where he had agreed to meet Dick Duncan at dinner.

He was just in time, as Dick and a salesman in the house his employer traded with, came up at the same time. They were introduced, and then all three entered together, where they had a dinner together.

When they were through, the salesman excused himself and hastened back to the store, leaving Dick and Jared together.

"Well, did you get through?" Jared asked, as they strolled out on the street.

"Yes. Did you?"

"An hour ago."

"Then we have the afternoon on our hands," said Dick.

"I have two tickets to the matinee at Niblo's," replied Jared, "so time won't hang heavy on our hands."

"Yes—that's good. What time does the performance begin?"

"At 2 o'clock, I believe."

"Then we have an hour yet," said Dick, looking at his watch. "We may as well stroll uptown and see whatever is stirring on the streets." And the two cousins locked arms and walked up Broadway, viewing the sights to be seen on that thoroughfare till the time to be at the theatre came.

They then went to the theatre, where they took the seats Harkins had provided that morning.

"I forgot to tell you," said Harkins, as they seated themselves, "that I have two lady friends playing in this piece under assumed names."

"The deuce!" exclaimed Dick. "Do I know them?"

"I don't think you do," was the reply. "They are pretty as pictures, but wouldn't have their names known for all the world."

"How did you know they were here?"

"I met them unexpectedly on Broadway this morning. We were all three surprised, and when I told them I was going to Niblo's to-night, they knew I would know them, and so owned up, begging me not to betray them. Of course I wouldn't do such a thing, but I was shocked, for they belong to a tip-top family."

"You surprise me," said Dick. "You will point them out to me, of course."

After the performance Jared and Dick waited outside the stage door for the appearance of the two girls. They soon came out.

"Oh, Mr. Harkins!" said Alice, "I was so afraid you would disappoint us!"

"There was no danger of that," said Jared. "This is my friend, Mr. Duncan—Miss Nellie, Dick."

"How do you do, Mr. Duncan?" she said, extending her hand. "I am happy to meet a friend of Mr. Harkins."

She ran her hand through his arm with an air of appropriation that tickled Dick very much. He had not the least idea of the free and easy manners of theatrical people. But the

self-possession as well as the vivacity of the pretty girl charmed him.

They went direct to the restaurant where Jared had ordered and paid for everything in advance.

It was a delightful supper, and Nellie sat beside Dick to be more readily able to exert the spell of her beauty upon him.

Two bottles of champagne were placed upon the table. Jared opened them.

Nellie took one and filled a glass for Dick and one for herself.

Alice did the same for Jared and herself.

"I never drink wine," said Dick, gravely, and Nellie looked up at him as if she could not believe her eyes or ears.

"Ah, you really don't mean that!" she said, a shade of disappointment overspreading her pretty face.

"Yes—I never drink," was the reply.

"He means that he is not in the habit of drinking," said Jared, "and I can bear witness to the truth of what he says. But as he is a ladies' man, he won't refuse to drink a glass of wine with one. Don't be an old fogey, Dick."

Nellie took up the glass and held it to his lips.

"If you refuse to drink with me, Mr. Duncan," she said, "I can never forgive you. I really couldn't stand it."

Ye who have never been exposed to such temptation must not find fault with Dick Duncan for drinking the wine thus held to his lips, as drink it he did.

"There now!" exclaimed Nellie, "you are a man after my own heart. I knew you could not refuse a lady's request. You feel better now you have tasted wine, don't you?"

Dick gave a sickly smile.

"It is not so dreadful, after all, is it? You have too much sense ever to drink too much. Fill up again and we'll have a toast."

The four glasses were filled, and Nellie held hers up in the gaslight and watched the sparkling beverage as it danced in the glass, saying:

"Here's to the flowing bowl; may it ever be filled with the nectar of the gods for the benefit of us poor mortals!"

## CHAPTER IV.

### THE EFFECTS OF WINE AND WOMEN.

The reader will remember how the beautiful actress had persuaded Dick Duncan to drink a glass of wine with her; how she held the glass to his lips with her own jeweled hand and smiled bewitchingly upon him.

Dick had never been a member of any temperance organization, and did not, therefore, break any pledge in drinking the wine. But he was known in Swandown as being strictly temperate in his habits.

The ice once broken it was smooth sailing afterward, and, urged by Jared Harkins and the two pretty actresses, he drank glass after glass till the sparkling champagne flew to his brain. His spirits arose in proportion as the intoxicating beverage coursed through his veins, and he laughed and sang snatches of songs, as gay as the gayest of the party.

"Ah, Mr. Duncan," said the charming Nellie, "I knew you were as lively as the liveliest of men, and that a glass or two of good wine was all that was required to bring you out. You see, we actresses come in contact with the public in our professional capacity, and meet all sorts of people. The most uncomfortable we meet with are those goody-goody sort who never take a glass of wine or give a good hearty laugh."

"But how about people who drink too much wine and get drunk?" he asked.

"Oh, when one drinks too much he is taken care of till he gets over it, and then, if he is a man of sense, he avoids a



repetition of it. Of course a drunkard is not wanted anywhere."

"You are right there, Miss Nellie," said Harkins. "But a glass or two of wine cheers one's heart as nothing else does. Give us a little song, please."

"What shall it be?"

"Anything—your own choice."

Nellie had a sweet voice which had been well cultivated. She sang several snatches of songs to the intense delight of Dick, who began to think she was the most beautiful of her sex.

"Bravo!" he exclaimed, clapping his hands till the waiter opened wide his eyes and grinned. "You have the sweetest voice I ever heard!"

"Bless me! what a compliment!" cried Alice. "You are showing a very marked partiality, Mr. Duncan."

"If he is," said Nellie, laughing good-naturedly, "why shouldn't he? You look to Mr. Harkins for appreciation, if you want it."

"Of course she will," said Jared, promptly, "and she shall have it. Miss Alice, you are all that poetry and love can crown you with."

"Oh, my! What a jewel you are!" exclaimed Alice. "Really, you must all drink to the realization of his words. Fill up and drink it down."

The glasses were filled again.

The two actresses were strong drinkers, and their bibulous feats on this particular night were only one of many, many similar ones in the past.

"Now, Mr. Duncan," said Nellie, smiling ravishingly on our hero, "you must beat the gallant speech of Mr. Harkins, or Alice will triumph over me, and jealousy, you know, is one of the necessary evils of our profession."

"Oh, his appreciation of his subject isn't equal to the occasion," said Alice, triumphantly.

"Really," said Dick, "my appreciation of the beauty and talent of Miss Nellie is so great that language fails me when I attempt to express it, and——"

"That will do, Mr. Duncan," said Nellie. "I will choose you as my champion. Alice can keep Mr. Harkins if she likes. We will now drink to each other."

They emptied their glasses, and then Alice sang another song.

"Now you give us a song, Mr. Duncan," said Nellie, laying a hand on his arm. "I am sure you can sing well."

"Yes, he can sing splendidly," said Jared. "I've heard him many a time singing for the girls of Swandown."

"Then of course he will sing for us."

And he did. Nellie and Alice both pressed him to sing with such eagerness that he could not resist. Indeed, he was fast losing his will power under the seductive influence of the wine and women. He arose to his feet, unsteady and almost reeling, and sang with great spirit "Comin' Through the Rye," which the two girls heartily applauded.

"I can't (hic) sing as (hic) well as I ought to," he managed to say, and then sat down.

"Why, you are the best singer I ever heard off the stage, Mr. Duncan," exclaimed Nellie. "Really, you ought to go upon the operatic stage. Your voice only needs training to electrify the public."

Dick blushed and looked quite sheepish. Such compliments from a beautiful woman were too much for him.

"You see New York is the place for you, Dick," said Jared. "Swandown is not large enough for a man of your capabilities."

"Hurrah for New—hic—York!" yelled Dick, with a strength of lung that alarmed even the two girls. "Swandown be hanged!"

"Look here, young man," said a man who sat at a table across the room, "you are too fresh."

"Who's too fresh?" demanded Dick.

"Why, you are," returned the stranger. "If you don't know how to behave yourself in a public restaurant, you ought to be put out, that's all."

"Put me—hic—out!" roared Dick. "Letsh see you—put me—hic—out!"

"Oh, go take a tumble!" said the man.

"I won't—hic—take er tumble!" he replied, getting up and making his way across the room. "I'll—hic—make you—hic—tum'le!"

The man quickly arose to his feet and planted a blow between his eyes that sent him reeling back to the table he had just quitted, almost stunned to insensibility.

Nellie and Alice both screamed at the top of their voices, and, gathering up their skirts, ran out of the restaurant, and left Jared to look after him.

"Now keep on your own side of the house," said the man, quietly resuming his seat at the table where he had been eating.

The proprietor came up and told Jared Harkins that he must insist on his keeping his friend quiet.

"Yes, of course," said Harkins, who now thought the racket had gone far enough. "I will take him to a hotel as soon as he gets on his feet again."

Dick was soon on his feet again, for the blow had sobered him.

Suddenly throwing Jared and the waiter aside, he darted forward toward the man who hit him, exclaiming:

"You struck me unawares, sir. Try it again, if you dare!"

The man sprang up and aimed a terrific blow at his head.

But Dick had practiced the art of self-defense until he was considered the "best man" in Swandown by the young men of the village. Conscious of his prowess, he parried the blow, and planted one on the stranger's nose, felling him like a log.

"That makes us even, I guess," he said, turning to Jared.

"See here, gentlemen!" cried the proprietor, greatly alarmed, "I cannot allow any disturbance in my place. The police will take everybody in the house to the station if you don't leave at once."

"Oh, that'll never do in the world. Come away, Dick," and Jared took him by the arm and tried to lead him out of the restaurant.

"No," said Dick, pulling from his cousin, "he hasn't—hic—got enough."

"Yes, he has—come on—the police are coming."

## CHAPTER V.

### ON HIS MUSCLE.

Jared took him by the arm and attempted to run out of the restaurant with him. But his blood was up and he was as obstinate as a mule.

"Hands off!" he said, sternly, as he pushed Jared and the landlord aside.

"But the police will take you in," said Jared, trying to reason with him. "Come on, and let's go home."

Dick could not see why he should be taken in for returning a blow, and stood there glaring at the two men.

"Let me get at him!" cried the man who had been so unexpectedly punished, getting up and rushing forward like an enraged tiger.

Jared and the proprietor both seized him to prevent another collision, leaving Dick alone.

"Oh, let him come," said he, coolly. "I can take care of myself."

"Well, if you don't leave I'll call the police," said the proprietor, turning to Duncan.



Just then a policeman stepped in, and asked:

"What's all this racket about?"

"We are trying to keep these two men from fighting," said the proprietor, still retaining his grip on the stranger.

The stranger was in a furious rage over his defeat, and struggled and swore like a pirate.

"Let me get at him!" he cried. "I'll jump down the coward's throat! I'll show him how to——"

"Here, come along with me!" said the officer, seizing him by the collar, and ordering Jared and the landlord to let go of him.

But no sooner had they released him than he dealt the officer a blow that came near flooring him. He staggered back several paces, but in another moment he raised his club and went at him again.

The man, however, dodged the club and knocked the officer down, seized his club and would have brained him with it had not Dick darted forward and dealt him a blow on the ear that stretched him insensible on the floor.

"Thank you, sir," said the officer on rising to his feet. "You did me a good turn that time."

"All right. Do you want any more help?"

"No," replied the policeman. "I can manage him now, I think," and, taking the club, he deliberately dealt the prostrate man a stunning blow on the head with it.

"Great God!" exclaimed Dick, in dumbfounded amazement. "That was a cowardly blow!"

The officer glared up at him and raised the club to give another.

"Stop!" cried Dick. "If you strike another blow I'll knock you into a cocked hat!"

"Shame—shame!" cried several men, whom the noise had attracted to the spot.

The blood was flowing freely from the wound on the man's head, and the indignation of the crowd was very great. But the policeman had been knocked down and was determined to have satisfaction.

"I'll take you in, too, sir," he said, turning to Dick.

"No, you won't. I've done nothing but protect you from being beaten; but if you strike that man again when he is down, I will put a head on you as sure as my name is Dick Duncan."

"Bully for Dick Duncan!" cried a voice in the crowd, which was growing larger and larger every minute.

The officer seized hold of him and shook his club in his face.

"This is a free country," said Dick, "and you'll have a free fight right here if you don't take your hand off me," and as he spoke he looked the policeman straight in the face and showed that he meant just what he said.

"Give it to him, Dick!" cried a voice in the crowd.

"Take your hand off me!" Dick sternly ordered.

"Come with me," and the obstinate officer jerked him forward with great force.

Quick as a flash Dick rained a half dozen blows on his face, and the officer sank down to the floor the worst whipped man on the force.

The crowd yelled with delight, as a New York crowd always does whenever an over-zealous policeman gets trounced by one of his intended victims.

But in another moment the crowd began to give way. Another policeman had put in an appearance and rapped for assistance.

"Now come away!" whispered Jared, who began to fear being arrested himself. "The police are coming to the rescue!"

Dick went out, and the crowd parted to let him pass.

"What's the trouble here?" the other policeman asked, pushing his way through the crowd. Before anyone could answer the question he saw his brother officer lying unconscious on the floor, and the stranger near by with a bleeding head.

"Who did this?" he asked of the proprietor of the place.

"The officer did that work," said the restaurant keeper, pointing to the man's bleeding head, "and another man did it for the officer."

"Who is the man—where is he?"

"Gone—went out as you came in," was the reply.

The officer then turned his attention to his wounded comrade, and soon had him on his feet again. But his feet were unsteady and his face was pounded to a jelly. Dick was a hard hitter and he had put in some good work on his face.

The wounded man was carried to the station-house, where his head was bound up, and then he was locked up in a cell till morning.

In the meantime Jared succeeded in getting Dick to a hotel, where they took a room together, and went to bed.

Early the next morning Jared arose and woke up Dick, who, springing up, said:

"We must hurry up and take the first train, Jared, or we may be late."

Jared looked at him in an amused sort of way, and said:

"I think you had better not get up to Swandown to-day, Dick."

"The deuce you say!" exclaimed Dick. "What's up now?"

"Just look in the glass there," said Jared, and Dick stepped before the mirror.

"Whew!" he said, as he glanced at the picture of his discolored eye in the glass. "That's awful! What must I do? That eye would disgrace me in Swandown."

"You had better send a dispatch to Upright & Co., telling them that you are unexpectedly detained in the city and will be up in a day or two."

"Why, this eye won't get cleared in a week!"

"I think there are surgeons here who can arrange it in a day or two."

"Then we must see one," said Dick, "for they will be uneasy at home, as they know that I have no business down in New York except that which I came down to attend to."

"You can write that Upright & Co.'s business has been attended to, but that a little business of your own detains you."

"Well, I wish I had gone home on the first train after attending to my business," said Duncan, gravely, "then I would have been spared all this trouble and mortification."

"Oh, that isn't anything!" And Jared affected to treat it as a light matter.

"That is no satisfaction to me," answered Dick. "Here I have been getting drunk and fighting in a restaurant at midnight in the city of New York. What became of the girls?"

"Oh, they left as soon as they saw trouble brewing, but they didn't blame you in the least. Nellie said you were the bravest man she ever saw. She said we must come and see her when we come down again."

"I don't want to see her again. She made me drink so much wine."

"Why, you didn't drink so much," said Harkins. "Nor you didn't get drunk, either."

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE ARTIST ON EYES.

Dick wrote a dispatch and Jared went to a telegraph office and had it sent to Upright & Co., his employers, at Swandown. He then returned to the hotel and found him in the deepest sea of remorse and repentance.

"Do you want me to find a surgeon for you, Dick?" Jared asked, as he entered the room.

"Yes, and find me a strong temperance pledge, too. I want to sign one right away."

Jared looked at him and burst into a roar of laughter.

"Come, Dick," he said. "Don't go and make a confounded



ass of yourself. Even kings and queens have carried black eyes; why should you let it trouble you so much?"

"A king could afford it," was the bitter reply. "A poor man can't."

"There are plenty of excuses by which you can claim the credit for that eye, Dick, and be all the more popular for it."

"Yes, but I won't lie about it," was the emphatic reply.

"You needn't lie about it at all," said Harkins. "A man insulted you and you knocked him down, and in the row you got the black eye."

"That may be true, but it will get out where we were, and that I was drunk. That's what hurts more than anything else."

"Oh, well, you'll soon get over that. You might go on a racket every night for ten years and not meet with such an accident as this."

"Accident! There's no accident about it," said Dick, bitterly. "I only wish it was. No. If I had not drunk that wine I would not have been in this fix. I'll never drink another drop."

"Oh, bosh! Why not laugh over the fun we had instead of wearing such a dismal face as that?"

"Look here, Jared, did you have any larks like this before?"

"Never—this is as new to me as it is to you. But I'm blest if I'm going to go into mourning over it. Just wait till I go and see if I can find out a surgeon who can fix up that black eye," and Jared turned and left the room.

Dick was in a terrible frame of mind, and he vowed he would never drink another drop of wine again.

"What will Leoine think of me?" he asked himself a dozen times. "How can I ever look her in the face again? Oh, what a fool I have been!"

But Jared went about in the greatest glee over the success of his scheme. Yet he was anxious to get out of the scrape, for he well knew he would not touch another drop of wine as long as the consequences of the first glass were still visible upon him.

Taking the clerk aside, he asked:

"Where can I get a surgeon to take the color out of a bunged eye?"

"Oh, you don't want any surgeon," said the clerk, smiling. "You want an artist."

"An artist!" exclaimed Jared, in amazement. "What does an artist know about eyes?"

"Well, he doesn't know as much as a surgeon," replied the clerk, "but he can paint over the colors so nobody can see them, and that's what they all want nowadays."

"Well, I'll be hanged if that isn't something new! I never heard of such a thing before. Where can I find such an artist?"

The clerk went to his desk and took out a card and handed it to him. Jared looked at it, and saw that it was simply:

"JONES,

Artist,

No. —, Broadway."

"He'll fix your friend all right in an hour," said the clerk, "so no one can see any black about it."

"I'll go around and see about it," said Jared, putting the card in his pocket, and leaving the hotel.

He went direct to the studio of the artist and found him painting the eye of a woman of fashion whose husband had given her a black optic. He had to wait his turn to see him.

"What can I do for you, sir?" said Jones, as soon as the lady was gone.

"I have a friend whose eye has been blackened by another man's fist," said Jared, "and I have come to see you about it."

"Well, I can conceal it for him without any difficulty."

"But how will you do it, and how much will it cost?"

"I will do it with flesh-colored paint, and for the sum of five dollars."

"Very well. Now I want you to tell him he must drink more wine for a few days, and then the color will be all right again."

"But is he a drinking man?"

"No—never drank a drop in his life till last night. He swears he'll never drink another drop again, and that will spoil all our fun in the city. I'll put in another fiver if you'll put it to him that way."

"All right—I am always willing to accommodate my customers. Bring on your friend as soon as you please!"

Jared went back to Dick and said:

"Old fellow, I have good news for you. I have found an artist who makes a business of painting black eyes their natural color, and he says he can place you in statu quo, as the lawyers say, in a few minutes. I have arranged with him to fix you up all right so you can go to Swandown to-night."

"That's just what I want," said Dick, quickly regaining his cheerfulness. "I never thought of that. I have read of that artist in the papers. Let's go then at once."

"Come on," and Jared led the way downstairs. Dick followed with his handkerchief to his eye as though the light pained it.

They soon reached the artist, who was waiting to receive them. He examined the blackened optic, and then proceeded to mix his paints, so as to produce the same color as the natural skin.

"Now, take this seat here, sir," he said, placing a chair near a window, "and we will soon have you all right."

Dick took the chair, and the artist went to work.

"Now, look in the glass," he said, a half hour later.

Dick looked in the mirror, and was delighted.

He was himself again.

"This is the triumph of skill!" he exclaimed. "How long will it remain?"

"Oh, you can let it stay a week or two, or you can wash it off in two or three days," was the reply; "but you must keep your blood a little heated to give it strength and tone—say a glass of wine now and then."

"Is that so?" Dick asked.

"Yes, that's necessary."

Dick looked in the glass again, and was so pleased with the change for the better that he said:

"Well, I guess I will have to take it, then."

"Of course. What else would a sensible man do?" said Jared. "Come on, let's have a glass now. Come, artist, take a nip with us."

"Certainly," said Jones. "I never refuse to take my own prescriptions," and the three went down together to the bar-room across the street.

## CHAPTER VII.

### DRUNK AND DISORDERLY.

The reader will now accompany Dick and the artist whom Jared Harkins had bribed to prescribe wine as a curative assistant to the paint he had put under his eye. They left the wily artist's office, and repaired across the street to a well-known Broadway drinking saloon, where Jared called for a bottle of wine.

They sat down to a table, and proceeded to discuss the wine.

"This is good wine," said the artist, holding up his glass between his face and the light which streamed in through a window. "I would take a black eye once a week for the sake of taking such medicine."

"If you take much of the medicine," said Dick, as he put the glass to his lips, "the black eye will naturally follow."



"I am not sure of that," said the artist. "I have drunk a thousand bottles of it in the last ten years and the black eyes have not come to me yet."

"That is certainly an exceptional case," replied Dick. "Here's hoping my case may be a similar one."

"Ha—ha—ha!" laughed Jared, as he drank his glass of the sparkling beverage. "In order to have a similar case, my dear boy, you must do as he did."

"How?"

"Why, drink the thousand glasses of wine, and——"

"Bottles—bottles, my dear sir," interrupted the artist, quickly.

"Yes, bottles—that's so."

"Well, I certainly won't undertake to do that," remarked Dick, as he set down the glass, "though it is, as you say, good wine. I have always understood, and have seen it with my own eyes, that the man who drinks wine to excess never fails to get into trouble at some time or other, which he would have avoided had he been sober."

"You are right, my friend," said the artist, blandly; "but I didn't mean common drunkards, I meant gentlemen—men who drink a glass or two as we do, and don't make beasts of ourselves."

"But the man who drinks wine moderately may learn to drink immoderately," persisted Dick.

"Of course," assented the artist, "or learn to do other foolish things. The man who is so weak as to do so, though, ought to be taken in charge by his friends and locked up."

"I agree with you there, Jones," said Jared Harkins, refilling the glasses before them, "and I have no doubt Duncan does, too. We can't possibly go so far as to make beasts of ourselves. We are supposed to be reasonable, rational human beings, who know both right and wrong when we see it. Drunkards we can never be. Here's to common sense in all things—may it prevail in every walk of life."

"Bravo! That's the best thing I have heard in an age. I'll drink to that!" and the artist raised his glass to his lips and emptied it at one effort.

Bewildered and confused by such plausible logic, Dick remained silent and drank his glass of wine with the others, his scruples growing weaker with each glass, as the effects of the stimulant were felt. At last he called for another bottle himself, the first time he had ventured to spend a cent of his earnings outside of regular necessities. Jared Harkins was overjoyed at the progress of his scheme.

"Isn't it delightful!" he exclaimed. "I feel as light as a feather, and don't care whether school keeps or not."

"That's just how I feel," said Dick, as he refilled his glass. "They don't keep such stuff as this in school, do they?"

"No," said Jones, "and that's why so many teachers and Sunday-school superintendents go for it on the sly. Here's to the man who invented it—may his vintage never fail him."

"Good—good!" cried Harkins, lifting high his glass. "May I never be so full as to be unable to respond to that sentiment. Down she goes."

Dick emptied his glass with great gusto, and remarked:

"Whoever invented champagne did a good thing. It is a drink fit for kings and queens."

"Yes, or American sovereigns," assented Jones.

"Why, we have no sovereigns in this country," said Dick.

"Oh, yes, we have. Every man in America is a sovereign—one of the people who rule the country."

"You are right—I forgot that. Here's to the American sovereign—may his reign last forever."

"Good—good! The best thing I ever heard!" cried Jones, refilling his glass and drinking the toast as quickly as possible.

"Yes—that would be a splendid Fourth of July toast," added Jared, as he drank to the toast.

"Or a speech," said Dick, who was fast becoming garrulous under the influence of the deceptive wine.

"Give us a speech," said Jones.

"No—no—no speechmaking," said Harkins. "It's too dry work. The best speech a man can make is to ask another—what'll you have?"

"Ha—ha—ha!" roared Dick, in a burst of wild, uproarious good humor. "That's it! What'll you have, gentlemen?"

"Another bottle of the same stuff," said Jones.

"Bring it along, barkeeper," cried Jared, and in another minute the third bottle was before them and the cork drawn.

The result was Dick was soon literally drunk, but striving to preserve his dignity and appear perfectly sober. Jared and Jones were both more or less under the influence of it, but, as they were old stagers, they felt it less.

"I say, Jared," said Dick, "let's go (hic) home."

"Won't go home till morning," said Jared, refilling Dick's glass.

"All right—don't get (hic) drunk, though, old fellow," he responded.

"Oh, we won't get drunk," said Jones. "Artists never get drunk." And solemnly refilling his glass the man of paint gulped it down with the gusto of an alderman.

Just then a couple of small Italian music boys, with fiddle and harp, entered the saloon and commenced to play.

"Hurrah!" cried Dick, the moment the music struck up, and springing to his feet, "let's have a dance!"

"Good!" cried Jones, who was himself about half drunk. "Give us some lively music now," and the two commenced leaping and bounding about, overturning chairs and tables. That could not be permitted in a Broadway saloon, so the obliging proprietor instantly ordered them to stop, and sent the two Italian boys away.

"You must stop this noise, gentlemen," said the proprietor, in a very positive tone. "I can't have such noise in my place."

"Whoop!" yelled Dick, lifting a table and hurling it half way across the room.

"Here!" hissed the proprietor, who was a burly, broad-chested Samson, seizing him by the shoulders and turning him toward the door. "Out with you!" and making a run he sent him spinning out of the saloon and clear across the pavement, where he brought up against a lamp-post with such force as to cause him to drop to the ground all in a heap.

He was only half conscious when a policeman picked him up.

"What's the matter with you?" the officer asked.

"Nossing," was the reply.

"No, I s'pose not. Come along with me and I'll take care of you," was the officer's reply.

He was too drunk to know just what he was doing, and so went along without a murmur, and was locked up for being drunk on the street.

Jared and Jones both saw the officer take him in; but they were just sensible enough not to interfere and be taken up themselves, so they let him go.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### REMORSE AND REPENTANCE.

The arrest of Dick Duncan by the police sobered Jared Harkins at once. He did not calculate on such a sudden interruption of his programme.

"It's too bad," he said, reflectively, when the officer had gone away with him. "He'll be in such a repentant frame of mind when he comes out that he'll never touch another drop of wine. I'll go and see the judge and try and get him out before the trial comes off."

He did so, but the judge was not in the mood to favor anybody but a powerful politician at that time, so he did not succeed in his effort to get him out of the clutches of the police.

Poor Dick remained all the afternoon and night in the cell, wondering where he was. Of course he was completely sobered when he was taken out and carried before the justice. The look of utter woe on his face was painful to see.



"What's this man been doing?" the justice asked, of the officer.

"I found him lying drunk on the sidewalk in front of Berg-hold's saloon, out of which he had been fired," was the testimony of the officer.

"What have you to say for yourself, young man?" the judge asked of Dick.

Dick was so mortified that he would rather have faced death a thousand times than stand where he was at the moment.

"It must be so, judge," he said, "for I had been drinking with two friends, and don't remember anything about it. I don't know that I was ever drunk before, but I do know that I will never get drunk again, no matter what may result from this thing."

"I believe you, young man," said the judge, "for you don't look like a man who is very much addicted to strong drink. I will let you off this time. You are discharged."

Both Jared and Jones were present to meet and congratulate him.

Jones grasped his hand and exclaimed:

"You're a lucky dog, Duncan; you got off easy. I was afraid you would be fined at least ten dollars."

"Why, what did I do?" Dick asked, looking puzzled over the whole affair.

"Why, you undertook to turn the place upside down and got fired out—that's all," was the reply.

"As I deserved to be," was the bitter comment of the young man, as they reached the street.

"No; you didn't deserve such treatment, Dick," said Jared.

"Yes, I did, and I hope I may get served even worse if I ever drink another glass of wine," replied Dick. "I got blind drunk and was arrested and locked up—that's the whole thing in a nutshell."

"No, the fault was the officer's," persisted Jared.

"Then why didn't you tell the judge so?" he asked in some surprise.

"Because you didn't call for any witnesses," was the reply, "but stood up there and confessed like a blubbering school-boy."

"Better confess and do so no more than to lie out of it. I was drunk, and that was the cream of the charge."

"Oh, well," said the artist, taking him by the arm and walking off with him in the direction of his studio, "it doesn't matter. Better luck next time. Come over to my place and let me touch up your face again. You ran against that lamp-post and got another bruise that left an ugly discolored spot."

"Yes, and it hurts me very much, too," said Dick, feeling the bruise with his hand.

"It won't hurt much, I guess. It looks worse than it hurts. Here we are—come up," and leading the way the artist entered his studio followed by Dick and Jared.

Seeing a large mirror against the wall Dick stepped in front of it and surveyed himself. His hair was uncombed and his face unwashed; an ugly spot marked a bruise on the left side of his forehead. He was so overcome at the sight that he sank down in a seat and buried his face in his hands.

"Oh, I wouldn't let it trouble me that way, Dick," said Jared, consolingly.

"Don't say a word, Jared," said Dick. "I could wish myself dead. How could I ever be such a fool? What will Mr. Upright say? I am now worse bruised than I was yesterday. I ought to have gone home yesterday and remained in my room until this ugly black eye regained its color, instead of staying here and drinking wine," and a groan escaped him as though coming from the inmost depth of his soul.

Jared arose and went into the next room, where Jones was making paint for the purpose of painting over the bruise on his forehead.

"Oh, Leonie—Leonie!" groaned Dick, when he was alone; "what can you think of me after this? How can I ever look into your sweet face again? You were so proud that I had

never tasted of wine, and now here I have been arrested and locked up for being drunk. It is well that my parents are in their graves, for their hearts would be wrung with grief and their heads bowed in shame over my conduct. How can I excuse myself to my employers, who have always been my best friends, and who would have trusted me with all their worth, solely because they knew I never drank anything? Oh, I could die and sink forever out of sight and memory of my friends!"

"Just get in this chair here," said the artist, re-entering the room with his paint ready for use, "and I will soon have you as handsome as ever."

Dick seated himself in the chair, and submitted to the operation of the artist, who was really a skillful hand at his business.

"There, now," said Jared, as soon as the artist had finished touching up the bruise, "you look as well as you ever did, save the little swelling over your left eye."

Dick went up to the mirror and gazed at his reflection.

"Oh, nobody will notice that," he said; "I can go back to Swandown now and go to work again."

"Yes; but you want to go to a barber and get your hair combed before going home or anywhere else," said Jones, as he surveyed his handiwork.

Dick felt in his pockets and found that he didn't have a cent of money.

"Why, what has become of my money?" he said, in some surprise.

"It must be at the police station," said Jones, "as they take everything away from a prisoner before they lock him up."

"Then they may keep it. I'll never go there after it," and Dick turned away with an air of determination that surprised Jared Harkins.

"Well," said Jared, "I've got enough to see us through. Come, let's go out and have some breakfast; I know you are hungry."

"Yes; I haven't had a bite of anything since yesterday."

"The deuce!" exclaimed Jared; "didn't they feed you at the station-house?"

"Yes; but I couldn't eat; I had no appetite."

"I don't blame you. You've got a head on you, too, I guess."

"Yes; if it is as large as it feels, I would be a curiosity," said Dick, as he followed Jones and Harkins downstairs to the street once more, this time to go to a restaurant.

Jared ordered a dinner for all three, and Jones ordered a punch for the same number.

The meal and drinks came about the same time.

"What's this?" Dick asked, as he held up the glass.

"Punch for your head," said Jones.

"My head has been punched enough," said Dick, setting it down. "I don't want it."

## CHAPTER IX.

### THE MURDER IN THE "TEMPLE OF MIRTH."

"Why, my dear fellow," said Jones, as he looked at his glass, "it is just the thing you need. It will take that swelling out of your head, and give you an appetite."

"I think I have appetite for all that I can eat," said Dick.

"But it will ease your head—take it," urged the artist.

"If I can stand the swelling, it shouldn't trouble you."

"But it does trouble me. I want to see my work prosper, and——"

"Never mind about your work," interrupted Dick. "I will certify to your skill, if need be."

"Don't be a fool, Dick," said Jared, drily. "One glass of punch will do you good."



"Yes; as that wine did yesterday."

"No, you can't get drunk on punch."

"I have heard differently."

"Oh, there are different kinds of punch. This will not make you drunk."

"Are you sure of it?"

"Yes—ask the landlord there."

The landlord, in obedience to a wink from Harkins, said he had never seen a man drunk on punch.

"All right, then," said Dick. "If I get drunk again, I'll hurt the man that caused it," and with that he drank the glass of punch, and smacked his lips as though he relished it.

"How do you like it?" Jones asked.

"Very good," was the reply, as he then proceeded to eat.

The punch aided his appetite very much, and did something toward clearing his head and raising his spirits.

During the meal Jared called for more punch for the party and Dick, feeling so much better for the glass he had already taken, drank the second one without question.

It flew to his head and made him feel quite lively and reckless. The feeling of remorse and repentance passed away, and he no longer felt solicitous about returning to Swandown.

"Now, let's have a ride out to Central Park," suggested Jared.

"I would like to go," said Jones, "but the fact is, I can't leave my place so long in the daytime. I would be happy to go around with you to-night."

"Very well. Come around to our hotel to-night," said Jared. "We will take the first train up for Swandown in the morning."

"That's the programme," said Dick, well pleased. They then took a carriage—the two cousins—and were driven out to Central Park, where they spent nearly the entire afternoon.

On the way back they stopped in front of a fine saloon, where Jared ordered another punch for them, including the driver.

Dick drank it without hesitation, as he was feeling thirsty.

Thus did the wily schemer manage to keep him in a state of semi-intoxication during the entire afternoon. When night came, Jones, the artist, found him ripe for anything that promised amusement and excitement.

"Where shall we go, now?" Jared asked, as they started out on Broadway.

"Let's take in the theatres first," said Jones, "and then we'll call on the elephants."

"Well, that's the racket, then. Here goes," and Jared led the way toward Niblo's theatre, where he and Dick had gone two nights before.

Nellie and Alice, the two pretty girls, recognized them, and smiled sweetly upon them.

"Hello!" said Jones; "do you know them?"

"Yes," said Dick. "I spent quite a pleasant hour with them night before last. Do you know them?"

"Of course I do. I painted an eye for Nellie two months ago."

"The devil you did!"

"Yes. Her husband gave it to her for being too free with another fellow."

"Her husband!" gasped Dick, his eyes wide open as saucers. "I didn't know she was married."

"No! Why, she has been married three times—divorced two and doesn't live with the third one. She's a ripper, Nellie is, yet she is very popular with the boys."

Dick gazed at the pretty actress as she played her part with such artless skill, and wondered how such frailty could be embodied in a form of such exquisite mould.

"And it was she who first tempted me to drink wine," he muttered to himself, as he gazed at her lithe form gliding like a fairy through the intricate mazes of the ballet dance. "It is strange that Jared has never mentioned these things to me. He ought to know as much about them as this artist does."

When the performance was over, Jared wanted to have the actresses go with them, but Jones objected.

"We want to see the elephant to-night," he said, "and don't want any girls along to be in our way."

"I agree with you—let's go it alone," said Dick, and that settled the question. The girls were not taken.

"Now, where shall we go?" said Jared, who, to tell the truth, did not know half as much about New York as he pretended. He had to depend on the artist to pilot the way about the city.

"We'll take in Sixth avenue, and then seek other pastures new," he said.

"Very well," said Jared, "lead the way, and like faithful sheep we'll follow."

"Let's have another punch before we go," suggested Jones.

"Yes—that would be the proper thing to do, I suppose," assented Jared, and they entered the nearest saloon to get the drinks.

Of course Dick drank another punch with them, so that by the time they started out he was ripe for any mischief.

In Sixth avenue they struck many places of very questionable character, where all sorts of people of both sexes were drinking, singing and making merry at a very late hour.

All this was both new and novel to Dick Duncan. He had seen nothing like it before, and was, therefore, greatly interested in everything around.

At last they entered the "Temple of Mirth," a well-known place of resort on the avenue, which was in full blast at that very late hour.

There were nearly a hundred people there drinking, singing and making merry in all sorts of ways.

The first thing to do on entering the "Temple of Mirth" is to drink something.

The query of:

"What'll you have?" from Jones, brought the answer of:

"A whisky punch," from Dick Duncan, and Jared followed suit.

"Bring me one also," said the artist, and the waiter retired to the bar to get punches.

They seated themselves at a table and waited for their drinks.

But they were not more than a minute in their seats when a big, burly fellow and three or four companions came up and said:

"Here, you duffers get away. We are going to have this table."

Dick Duncan was naturally obliging and good-natured, and had the man asked for the table as a favor to himself and companions he would have gracefully yielded. But his manly spirit naturally resented the bully's demand.

"No, sir!" he said. "We duffers are going to keep this table. You loafers go somewhere else."

His coolness rather startled the bully; but seeing that Harkins and the artist were timid and ready to yield, he seized the table and lifted it above his head, and started off with it, amid the laughter of his companions.

Quick as a flash Dick sprang to his feet and dealt him a blow on the ear that knocked him completely from under the table, which fell to the floor with a tremendous crash. The bully rolled on the floor half stunned, while Dick coolly picked up the table and set it back in its former place.

Everybody rushed forward to see what the trouble was. But the bully had now recovered his feet, and giving the cue to his associates, they all four rushed upon our hero.

Dick knocked two of them down, when the others closed upon him, and then they all fell to the floor in a heap, in a rough-and-tumble fight.

But the proprietor and waiters soon parted the combatants, pulling them away by main strength.

The bully, however, lay gasping on the floor, and when they examined him they found a knife sticking to the hilt in his heart.



A minute or two more and he was dead.

"This is murder!" cried a friend of the bully.

At the word "murder," Dick Duncan turned deathly pale and dashed for the door.

## CHAPTER X.

### HIDING IN DISGUISE.

As Dick Duncan dashed out of the "Temple of Mirth," Jared Harkins and Jones, the artist, quickly followed him. The crowd in the saloon were too excited to think of pursuing. They were crowding around the dead bully to get a glimpse of the wound, in which the knife was still sticking.

Out on the sidewalk Dick paused for a moment, as though dazed by the sudden terrible ending of the trouble.

Jared came to his side.

"We must get away from here, Dick, as soon as possible. That fellow is dead!"

"Yes—come on," said Jones, "or you'll be arrested for murder."

"But I didn't do any murder," said Dick, speaking for the first time.

"Yes, you did," said Jared, "but I don't blame you—come on," and, starting off up the street, the other two followed him.

On the first corner they took a street car, and went uptown toward Central Park. Dick was as white as a ghost, but remained silent. Not a word escaped his lips.

When they reached the park they were not allowed to enter at that late hour.

"Let's walk down the street, then," said Jared.

They locked arms and walked off together.

"This is awful," said Harkins, when they had walked some distance. "Why the deuce can't you control your temper, Dick Duncan?"

"Because I was drunk—your punch got into my head," was the bitter reply. "You are more to blame than I am, Jared Harkins. Besides, it was more than human nature could stand to have that bully come up and walk off with our table."

"But that was no reason why you should stab him to the heart," said Jared.

"I didn't do that," was his emphatic reply. "You know I carry but one knife, and here it is now," and with that he produced a small penknife which he had carried in his vest pocket for more than three years.

"Yes, that's your knife," said Jared, as though greatly puzzled. "But who could have done it, if you didn't?"

"That's what troubles me. I can't understand it."

"I think one of his friends intended it for you, and struck him by mistake in the rough and tumble," said Jones, after a pause of several minutes.

"Yes—that must be it," said Dick.

"But he was fighting you and you him," said Jared, "which will make it go hard with you, I'm afraid."

"Yes," added Jones, "you will be charged with the crime. You ought to get out of the country as soon as possible."

"My God!" gasped Dick. "I am as innocent of that man's death as either of you!"

"That may be," said the artist. "But you were both desperately fighting, and the world will believe that you killed him. It is perfectly natural that it should so believe under the circumstances."

He was utterly overwhelmed with the terrible situation in which he found himself.

"I am ruined!" he moaned, in the deepest anguish, "and all through you, Jared Harkins. Had you not induced me to go with you and to drink wine, this would not have happened. Three times within as many days have I been in trouble

through drinking wine, and yet you both seemed to take special delight in getting me to drink."

"But we drank as much as you did," said the artist. "Why don't you behave yourself like a decent man should? Harkins and I have had no trouble."

"You are different from me, I suppose. But now the mischief is done. My reputation is gone forever. If I had a weapon my body would be lying in the morgue to-morrow morning."

"Oh, that is not the way to face trouble. You——"

"You don't know what I have lost, Mr. Jones," said Dick, interrupting him. "I must either perish on the scaffold or else pine away my life in a prison cell, or be a murderer on the face of the earth the rest of my days. Even if acquitted of the charge of murder my reputation would be forever ruined. I have been drinking and visiting disreputable places, while remaining away from my post of duty. No, sir, give me a weapon and I will quickly end my disgraced career forever."

"That would be the act of a coward," said the artist. "Now, I am sure you are innocent. Time will prove it. Come to my office and all will be right. I'll paint your face as dark as a Spaniard's, and then no one will recognize you as the man who was supposed to have stabbed the man. You can then go about the city and wait for the verdict of the coroner's jury."

"Yes, that's the best thing to do," said Jared, "and then you can go to another hotel and wait for something to turn up."

So they went back to Jones' place, where he soon put a dye on Dick's face that would not yield to soap and water.

"Now you can march in right among them," said the artist, "and have no fear of the detectives. No one would ever know you for the man who was in that place to-night."

"But I have no money to pay my way at a hotel," said he. "What shall I do?"

"I can let you have fifty dollars, Dick," said Jared, "which I will do if you will promise me on your honor not to kill yourself."

"I will give that promise to hold good until the repayment of it releases me," was the reply.

"That will do—here's the money," and Jared counted out five ten-dollar bills and gave them to him.

"I will go to French's Hotel, and stop there till we see what grows out of this thing," and with that he turned away and left the studio of the artist.

Out on the street, he wended his way downtown to French's Hotel, where he registered under the name of Duncan Dix, and went up to the room assigned him.

In the solitude of his room he sank down on the bed, and burying his face in his hands, moaned:

"Oh, Leonie—Leonie! I have lost you forever! I shall never look you in the face again. You thought me so strong, and I was so weak as not to be able to say 'no,' when tempted to drink. How can I ever face your gentle, loving looks again? Oh, if I could only die and be forgotten! Swandown will be ashamed of one so weak and debased. I can never go there again. All the world will know of my fall and believe me guilty of murder. To give myself up will only result in conviction for murder. We were fighting and the man was killed. Oh, if I could only die and end it all. It will break Leonie's heart, and that will be a worse crime than my weakness has yet developed. I shall have to go to the uttermost parts of the earth to escape the vengeance of that man's friends."

He retired to bed finally, and tossed about till near daylight ere his eyes closed in sleep. His sleep was restless, for in the dreams that came he again fought fiercely with the bully and his friends, only to awake with a start, and reeking with cold perspiration.

But the sun was up almost to high noon when he arose and prepared to dress himself. On looking in the mirror, he was reassured of safety in the disguise the coloring of his face had given him.



"They would not know me now," he said. "I must keep very reticent and say but little, or my voice or something in my manner may reveal my identity, when all would be lost.

When dressed, he left and locked his room door, and went downstairs to the office of the hotel.

## CHAPTER XI.

### THE VERDICT—MURDER.

When Dick Duncan parted with his cousin, Jared Harkins, at the studio of the artist after midnight, he failed to notice the joy expressed in the countenance of his kinsman. Even the artist failed to notice it, and when Harkins left the studio, he left the impression on Jones' mind that he was deeply solicitous about his cousin's ability to escape the consequences of the trouble.

"I will call again to-morrow," he said, as he went away, "as we will have to tell all we know about the affair."

"Yes, of course, and it will give us an unpleasant notoriety for a time," said the artist. "But I suppose we can't get away from it."

"No, we can't get away from it. To absent ourselves would injure us and do Dick no good."

"You must not go down to his hotel, as that would give him away. He could call here, as if he were a customer of mine, and we could then talk with him about the thing."

"He ought to leave the country," said Jared. "It doesn't stand to reason that he can remain here in the city where so many detectives will be on the lookout for him."

"You may be right—but let him wait till the coroner's jury has rendered a verdict."

"Well, I'll be around to-morrow," and they shook hands and parted.

"Aha, Mr. Dick Duncan!" chuckled Harkins as he wended his way back to his hotel. "So I am in a fair way to get you out of the way at last. If you do not swing for the murder of that man it will be no fault of mine, though the world will consider me the most faithful of friends to you in your trouble. But you must go. You are in my way. If you do not hang you will be a convict for a long term of years. Aunt Huldah will never leave her fortune to a convict. In either event my purpose will be accomplished, and I shall be satisfied. That knife was, no doubt, intended for you. By what mischance it struck the other man, the Lord only knows. Had it gone where it was intended to go I would have been relieved of all further trouble. But I will see you through, you may depend."

He went up to his room and retired to bed. Like Dick he rolled and tossed till near daylight, and then dropped off into a restless slumber.

How long he had slept he knew not. He was awakened by a loud knocking on his door.

Springing out of bed he hastened to open the door.

There were two police officers there.

"You are wanted, sir," said one of them.

"What for?" he asked.

"As a witness of that murder at the 'Temple of Mirth,' in Sixth avenue last night," replied the officer.

"Very well. How did you find me out?"

"Somebody in the crowd knew Jones. We found him this morning, and he gave us your name and address. You will have to give bail to appear, or go to the house of detention, if the coroner so orders."

"Very well. I'll be ready to go with you in a few minutes," and then, turning to his clothes, he quickly dressed himself, and prepared to accompany the officers.

He was taken to the inquest with the artist, where Jared revealed the name, age and address of Dick Duncan, giving most

damaging evidence with an air of very great reluctance, as though the ties of both friendship and blood were a strong pressure even against the truth.

The result was a verdict that James Ardell came to his death at the hands of Richard Duncan.

The verdict was published in the afternoon of that day, and Dick Duncan saw his name in the public press as that of a murderer for whom all the police and detectives in the city were eagerly watching.

"That ruins the good name of Dick Duncan," he said, as he turned away, sick at heart. "All is lost, and I will never see Leonie again. I am a wanderer on the face of the earth. How I am to go to a place of safety with the money I have I don't know. Jared and that artist are the only parties who know me in this disguise. Will they keep the secret? Is that artist safe? Would he sell the secret to the friends of that man, who was, it seems, a prominent ward politician? He had a host of friends, and no pains will be spared to get me into the clutches of the law. I am innocent of that fatal blow. I never had any knife in my hand. There is some mystery about it which time may disclose, and do my name the justice that is due it. But it is now very dangerous for me to remain longer here. I will go away and wait for time to vindicate me. I can't understand how Jared could have talked as he did at the inquest."

Almost desperate enough to blow out his brains, Dick went back to the hotel, and in the privacy of his room pondered over what was best to do.

"But for the hope that I may some day be cleared of this horrible crime, I would end my life here and now. But something tells me," he muttered to himself, "that I shall yet be cleared of this cruel charge. I will write to Mr. Upright and tell him frankly how it all came about. He will believe me, I know. Poor Leonie will believe me, but it will break her heart to read what is in the evening papers to-day. My God, what a blight has fallen upon me! It is the blight of the bowl, which has blasted the hopes, happiness and reputations of millions. Oh, why did I drink the wine—why did I drink it?"

Burying his face in his hands, he wept as he never wept before, and the flow of tears relieved the overcharged heart. Tears will relieve but never cure. When a strong man weeps he is calmer afterward, though the cause of the tears still remains.

"Where shall I go?" he asked himself a score of times. "I have not money enough to leave the country. To remain here is dangerous, and yet it may be the safest place after all. It would be expected that I would leave the country, and I would be hunted for throughout Canada. I will remain here in another disguise, and see if I can't find out who did that stabbing!"

Going to another hotel, he took a room and paid for it for a month in advance, and resolved to go among those four men who were with Ardell when he was killed, as he was sure one of them killed him by mistake.

## CHAPTER XII.

### THE TURNING OF A CARD.

When he was sure that he had successfully evaded Jared Harkins and the artist, Dick proceeded to procure a quantity of the fluid which had dyed his face such a deep olive color. With this he proceeded to wash himself from head to foot, in order to guard against any accidental discovery by others that only his face and neck were of that color.

"Now my color will appear genuine," he said, as he surveyed himself in the mirror. "I must have a tooth pulled, trim out my beard to match with my mustache, and then even



Jared wouldn't know me. I will never recognize a friend of my better days, till my innocence of this crime is established. Then, and not tell then, will I be Dick Duncan again."

That night, in his little room up near the roof of the hotel, he sat down and wrote to Leonie, his heart's idol:

"MY DARLING:—I know your heart is breaking, but I know you will believe me when I tell you that I am innocent of that man's blood. They all say I killed him. I did not. I never struck him except with my hand. There were four men fighting me at the same time. Time will prove my innocence. But to surrender now and unjustly suffer for the crime of another is more than I can do. My fault is in my yielding to the persuasion of another to go to places where I should not have gone, and to drink wine. The blight of the bowl has fallen upon me, and I am no longer worthy of your love. Forget me if you can. I cannot forget you, though, and shall ever mourn my weakness in losing you and all I held dear on earth. Do not try to write to me, for that might lead to my arrest. I shall go where safety is assured, and wait for time to prove my innocence. Yours, even in death, DICK DUNCAN."

Sealing this, he wrote another to his employers, Upright & Co., in Swandown, in which he said:

"Having attended to the business which you entrusted to my hands, I was about to return home, when I was persuaded to remain and go to the theatre. After the theatre, I was persuaded to drink wine, which I had never done before, as you know. The result was, I became mixed up in the fight that resulted in the death of Mr. Ardell. I am innocent of his death, but cannot prove it. Time will vindicate me. By yielding to temptation, I have lost everything that was dear to me in life. I may never see you again. You will do me justice, I know. What money you owe me—seven hundred dollars, I believe—pay to her whose name you will find on a separate slip of paper in this letter. Good-by, my best of friends.

"DICK DUNCAN."

"That is the last link that leads across the gulf between me and the past," he muttered, as he sealed the two letters. Then he went out and mailed them in a box on the street corner below the hotel.

Turning away, he re-entered the hotel, and went to bed.

The next morning he went to a dentist on the Bowery and had a front tooth pulled. It was surprising what a change it made in his appearance when he spoke.

"I shall have no fears now," he said. "No man will suspect me in the dark, Spanish-looking man. When my mouth gets well I'll hunt for employment in the city, and keep up a hunt for the man who stabbed Mr. Ardell."

Two days later he read in the papers that everybody in Swandown believed him innocent, though Jared Harkins, his cousin, had stated that it was a mistake that Duncan was a strictly temperate man.

He said young Duncan was in the habit of drinking to excess in private, while in public he was a teetotaler.

Dick was astonished when he read that statement as coming from Jared Harkins.

"What can Jared mean?" he asked himself a dozen times. "He knows better than that. He knows that I never drank wine in my life till that night with that actress. Why does he talk that way about me?"

Dick began to think that Jared had gone back on him.

"Will he tell the detectives that I have dyed my skin? If he does, it may be best for me to get out of New York after all."

The suspicion haunted him.

He little dreamed of the deep scheming of Jared Harkins.

But, trusting in the changes he had effected, he concluded

to go in search of Ardell's friends. He had their names, which he had taken from a report of the coroner's trial.

When night came he went up on Sixth avenue, to the "Temple of Mirth." There he met two of the men. They were sitting at a table, drinking beer and talking about Ardell's murder.

With a polite bow, he asked:

"Pardon me, gentlemen, but will you join me in a bottle of wine?"

"Certainly," they both replied; "take a seat with us."

He sat down at the table, and ordered a bottle of champagne.

"Here's to a better acquaintance, gentlemen," he said, as he raised his glass to his lips.

"Yes—yes; my name is Hank Howard," said one of them.

"And mine is Joe Jenckes," said the other.

"Happy to know you, gentlemen," bowed Dick. "My name is Duncan Dix, of Charleston, South Carolina. I hope we may meet again."

They drained their glasses, and then commenced talking of first one thing and then another. They finally got to speaking of the Ardell murder, when both men declared themselves friends of the dead politician.

"Is it true that Ardell actually took up that table and walked off with it?"

"Yes; it was a playful freak of his," laughed Howard.

Duncan smiled.

"What would a Southerner have done under the circumstances?" Jenckes asked.

"Down South he would have drawn a revolver, and quietly ordered him to put that table back in its place," was the reply. "But in New York here he might have left the place in disgust."

"Suppose he would refuse to put it back—then what?"

"Well, it would have been Ardell's funeral, that's all," was the quiet reply of the supposed Southerner.

"Well, we do things differently here," said Jenckes.

"I see you do; but somehow or other the result is the same."

Howard smiled and said:

"I guess you are pretty near right."

They drank two more glasses, and then Howard proposed to show the Southerner through the immense building. The billiard-room was first visited, where they found every table occupied. Thence they went into the main gambling room, where faro and every other game of cards were carried on.

"Here is where fortunes are made every night," said Howard.

"And more often lost," added Duncan.

"Yes, sometimes; but I managed to scoop in some ten thousand dollars the other night."

Dick saw at a glance that the man was in league with the bank, and resolved to be on his guard. He had only about fifteen dollars of the fifty Jared had lent him.

"Suppose we try our luck?" said Howard, producing a five-dollar bill and putting it on the king.

Dick thought for a moment, and then said.

"I didn't come out to play to-night, but I'll risk five dollars," and then he placed that amount on the ace.

To his surprise it won.

He played again and won.

The third and fourth time it won.

The next deal he placed the whole on the ace and won again.

By some strange freak of fortune he again put up the whole on the ace and won.

The dealer snapped his eyes at Howard, and Howard glared at the pretended Southerner as though surprised at the result.

By a desperate effort, Dick appeared cool and unconcerned.

"You may try that again," he said, doubling his bet on the ace.

Again he won.

"Now, let's try the king again," and then he moved the whole stack over on the king.



The king won, and a muttered oath escaped Howard and the dealer.

He had won over five thousand dollars!

Yet he was cool as an iceberg.

"I'll let it stand for another deal," he said.

Every man held his breath.

The card turned, and he was ten thousand dollars richer!

### CHAPTER XIII.

#### A CHANGE OF FORTUNE.

The sudden fortune that had come upon Dick Duncan at a moment when he was in the very depths of despair, almost stunned him. For a time his head grew dizzy, and he leaned back in his chair and closed his eyes.

"Are you ill?" the dealer asked. "Take a glass of wine," and he quickly ordered a glass of champagne for him.

"Yes," said Howard, rising from his seat, "I will get it for you."

Dick happened to glance over at the dealer, and thought he saw a significant look in his eyes, which immediately put him on his guard.

"No," he said, firmly. "I won't drink any wine. Deal again, please."

"For how much?" the dealer asked.

"For the whole pile," was the reply.

"I can't do it," said the dealer, with savage emphasis. "I'll play you for one thousand."

"Ten thousand or nothing," said Dick, looking him in the eyes, his own face as white as the dye on it would allow.

"Then the play is off."

"Very well—give me the money, if you please."

The banker paid over the money, and Dick thrust it into his pocket—a big roll of bright new bills.

He then arose to his feet, the cynosure of all eyes in the room. They regarded him as one of the famous southern gamblers who frequently broke faro banks, and shot those who questioned his honor.

They little dreamed that it was the first time in his life that he had ever played the game, and that his success, instead of being the result of a desperate skill, was a pure and simple streak of good fortune.

But dreading the result of further playing with one so greatly favored by fortune, the dealer refused to go on with the play, and paid him the money.

"You have had good luck to-night," said Howard, as he stood close by his side. "You ought to thank me for suggesting the game to you."

"With all my heart," replied Dick. "Come to my hotel and I'll give you one thousand dollars of the money, if you will accept it."

The proposition nearly took Howard's breath away.

"Accept it!" he whispered, for he didn't wish anybody to hear him. "Of course I will. Will a duck swim? Let's have a bottle of wine?"

"No, I won't drink any more wine to-night. Let's go away from here."

Howard could not object, for he was anxious to finger that one thousand dollars, and so he went out with him.

Out on the street, had he not feared that Duncan was armed, as all southern gamblers are supposed to be at all times, he would have made the attempt to kill him and secure the money. But as it was, he went with him to his hotel, where he knew he would get at least a thousand dollars.

"This is where I am stopping," said Dick to Howard, as they entered the hotel. "I don't know how long I shall remain here, as I am not very well pleased with it. Come up to my room and I will give you the money I promised."

They ascended in the elevator to the top floor, on which Duncan had engaged a room by the month.

Howard was surprised at not seeing any baggage in the room, but said nothing about it. The man, he thought, must have been hard up before winning that big sum of money.

"There is a thousand dollars, Mr. Howard," said Duncan, handing him twenty fifty-dollar bills. "I certainly should not have thought of playing any to-night had you not suggested it. I hope you may some day have as good luck as I have."

"Thanks—you're a square man, Dix," said Howard, as he pocketed the money. "I hope we may have such another haul together. I never saw such a run of good luck in my life."

"Yes, fortune was in my favor to-night," replied Dick. "We'll go down now and have a soda cocktail before the bar closes," and leading the way downstairs to the barroom, Dick called for a soda cocktail and Howard took a whisky straight.

"Here's to more of the same sort," said Howard, as he drank his whisky.

"Yes—always," replied Dick, drinking his cocktail.

Then shaking hands with Howard, he went back up to his room with nine thousand dollars in his pocket, while the other went on his way rejoicing in the good fortune that had so unexpectedly come to him.

Closing the door of his room, Dick sank down on his bed and glared at the wall.

"Did ever anybody fall to such luck in this world?" he muttered, scarcely realizing that he was not dreaming. "What does it mean? Has Providence thrown this money into my hands to escape the country with, or to enable me to find out who did that stabbing, and thus clear myself of the charge of murder? Or did I do wrong in gambling for it? God knows I want to do right, and I know I ought not to take this money; but if it will establish my innocence I know it will be justifiable. Only think that I never played a card before in my life, and yet won such a sum of money the first time! I can now turn all my attention to ferreting out the real murderer of Ardell. I will keep in with Howard and Jenckes. They were mixed up in the fight. Howard is my friend now, and I will get into his confidence by pretending to be as bad as he is himself. Nine thousand dollars! How that sum would set me up in business! I could then marry Leonie and—oh, Leonie, my darling! I know your heart is breaking. God forgive me, but I did not kill him!"

He went to bed, but not to sleep till the morning sun began to peep into his little room. He was thinking—thinking of everything and wondering if his experience was different from others who drank wine only occasionally.

At last he dropped asleep and dreamed of Leonie in the pretty vine-clad cottage at Swandown. It was a sweet dream of love, and he was happy.

When he awoke it was nearly noon, and the terrible present came to him with all the horror of its reality.

"It was only a dream," he moaned, sadly, "and I am still a hunted fugitive. Oh, God, where will it end?"

Dressing himself, he counted his money to see if it was all there, and then went down to breakfast.

While eating he made up his mind to purchase a trunk and fill it with several changes of clothes, have it sent to another hotel and take up his quarters there. This he attended to without delay, selecting a well-known Broadway hotel as the one best suited to his purpose. Before banking hours closed he deposited all his money but about one hundred dollars, in the bank nearest the hotel.

"Now I am ready to cultivate Mr. Howard and Mr. Jenckes," he muttered, as he purchased a revolver and concealed it about his person. "I am hunted as a murderer, yet I am hunting for the real murderer myself. If I fail to find him I am lost—lost to everything and everybody I ever loved."



## CHAPTER XIV.

## AMONG HIS ENEMIES.

When the shades of night again enveloped the great city, Dick Duncan wended his way toward the "Temple of Mirth," on Sixth avenue. At that hour the great thoroughfare was alive with crowds of both sexes, all in eager pursuit of pleasure, and not very particular as to the quality or shape in which they found it.

On every hand the sound of music, good, bad and indifferent, greeted him. The clinking of wine and beer glasses was an unceasing strain, and the boisterous laughter of men and women was heard even across the avenue.

The most prominent of all the places of wild revelry by night in that part of the city was the "Temple of Mirth," whither Dick now wended his way.

When he entered the place, he heard his name called.

He started and looked around.

"The detectives are close on Dick Duncan's track," said a man in front of the bar, talking to a party of three or four others.

"Glad to hear it," said another. "Hope they'll succeed. If he isn't caught within a week, there'll be a big reward put up for him."

"That's what the detectives are waiting for," said the first speaker. "They can put their hands upon him at any time, and are only waiting for the big reward Ardell's friends are talking about putting up."

"Oh, they are sharp fellows—those detectives," said a third man. "They are always on the make. But I heard to-day that Duncan was still in the city—has never left it, in fact, and that he walks the streets every day in disguise."

"What kind of disguise?" one asked.

"I don't know, but——"

"Either an old man or an old woman, you may just bet," interrupted another. "He wouldn't try to remain a young man, you know. He's not such a fool as that."

"Well, if they catch him, he'll swing as sure as fate. I understand that one of his most intimate friends positively identifies the knife found sticking in poor Ardell's heart as Duncan's knife."

"Yes. I heard as much myself," added another.

"Jenckes says he saw him stab him," remarked a fourth.

"Oh, they've got evidence enough. All they want is the murderer."

Dick heard all this and more.

His knees almost gave way under him at the thought of the peril that surrounded him. Here were friends of the murdered man who would swear his life away, and rejoice in the devilish work.

His heart sank within him.

He staggered to the bar and gasped:

"Give me some wine."

The bartender promptly put a bottle and glass before him. He filled the glass to the brim, and emptied it. The generous fluid coursed through his veins like liquid lightning, and made him feel stronger for the time.

"Helloo!" exclaimed one of the party, "there's the Southerner who whipped the tiger so badly last night!"

The entire party turned and gazed at him.

The wine he had just taken made him feel more confident.

"Gentlemen," he said, smiling blandly, "will you join me in a glass of wine?"

"Of course we will," said one of the party, as they all crowded around him.

"Helloo, Dix!" exclaimed Howard, who came up at the moment. "When did you arrive?"

"Just come in," he replied, shaking hands with him. "We are going to have a drink. Will you join us?"

"Will a bird fly? Ask me some more hard questions and pass the bottle around."

One of the party hinted to Howard that it would make things more pleasant if he would introduce the party to the lucky Southerner.

"Of course," said Howard, and forthwith he introduced the whole party to our hero. They then turned to the bar, and for several minutes busied themselves in filling and emptying their glasses of the rich wine set before them.

Then they turned their attention to inspecting the various amusements of the place, the entire party keeping well together with Dick.

"Here is the place where Ardell was killed last week," said one of the party, when they reached the spot where the tragedy occurred.

"Ah, indeed!" said Dick. "I remember reading something about it in the papers. Have they caught the fellow yet?"

"No, not yet," replied one of the party.

"Left the country, I guess," observed Dick.

"No, they say he is hiding in the city in disguise."

"Then they ought to be able to take him," he said.

"Yes, they can get him easily enough. They are just waiting for the reward."

"Is that the way they do here in New York?"

"Yes, it's one of the ways," and the party laughed good-naturedly, while another called for drinks again.

Of course Dick could not avoid drinking again. What he had already taken was beginning to tell upon him.

"You made a big pull on the bank last night," remarked one of the party half-confidentially, as he leaned against the counter.

"Yes; I intended to burst it, but they weakened and wouldn't double," was the nonchalant reply.

The man looked admiringly at him.

"How did you manage it?" he asked.

"Simply betting on the winning cards," said Dick. "Very easily done when you know how."

"I s'pose so," said the man; "but the 'knowing how' is just what I am after. Are you going to play again to-night?"

"No, I think not. I don't care anything for the sport, and never play except when I want money."

This declaration greatly surprised the man.

"I never heard a man talk that way before," he said.

"Never did? Well, I suppose I am a little queer at times," and Dick smiled as he turned away from the bar.

"Hold on, Dix!" cried Hank Howard, "we are going to have another drink, and you must join us. What'll you have?"

"I'll take wine," was the reply.

It was the fourth drink, and in less than ten minutes after he took it, Dick was almost too drunk to know what he was doing. But he was keenly alive to the peril of his situation.

It was at this moment that Billy Dwyer, the celebrated minstrel, entered and approached the bar. He was drunk, yet fully able to recognize every acquaintance in the crowd. They grasped his hand and welcomed him warmly, for everybody liked the genial minstrel, and delighted to hear him sing. He could sing as no other man could sing, and that was his strength with the public.

"Glad to see you, Billy!" exclaimed Howard, shaking his hand warmly. "Would ask you to have a drink, only you can't hold any more."

"I can't, eh! Drink you—hic—drunk in—hic—'alf hour, by—hic—er watch," was the valiant minstrel's reply.

"Ha-ha-ha!" roared the party. "There's a challenge for you, Hank!"

"I know you can hold as much as the bottomless pit, Billy," said Howard. "I weaken. What'll you have?"

Dwyer called for his favorite drink and drank it, after which he was introduced to Duncan.

Dick had often heard of genial Billy Dwyer, the famous



singer and minstrel of the stage, and was therefore quite pleased at making his acquaintance.

"Heard about you," said Billy "Big run—hic—on 'er bank lasht night," as he shook Duncan's hand.

"Why, it seems that everybody has heard of that!"

"Yes—made 'em sick," was Billy's rejoinder, as they strolled toward a table and a couple of chairs, at which they seated themselves for a chat.

## CHAPTER XV.

### PURSUED BY THE POLICE.

They had not long been seated at the table when a waiter who did not know either of them, advanced and said:

"Give your orders, gentlemen."

"Clear out," said Dwyer, waving his hand to the waiter.

"You can't loaf around here, you bummer!" exclaimed the burly waiter, seizing Billy by the collar and lifting him clear out of the chair. "Get out of here!"

Dwyer was a mere infant in his hands, and in another minute he would have been fired out on the street.

But Dick went to his rescue, and dealt the waiter a blow on the left ear that sent him reeling away over another table and chairs.

"Take that, you insolent scoundrel!" he cried, following the blow with a kick.

In an instant the greatest uproar was the result. Women screamed and men swore. Chairs and tables were overturned as waiters rushed forward toward the bar where the proprietor stood. The officer on duty promptly rushed forward to arrest Duncan.

"Back!" cried Dick, sternly. "Right is right. I defended myself and friend. Arrest the man who struck the first blow," and then he pointed to the waiter whom he had knocked down.

"Yes—there's the rascal!" cried Dwyer, pointing to the same man.

"You are my prisoner, sir!" said the officer, seizing Duncan by the collar.

Whack! went Duncan's fist on the officer's nose, and down he went as though a thunderbolt had struck him.

"Waiters!" cried the proprietor to his beer-jerkers; "put that man out, or I'll discharge every one of you."

They made a rush for him. He knocked two of them down, and then drew his revolver.

"Send for a hearse," cried Dwyer, as soon as he saw the revolver, "and I'll sing the chant for the funeral!"

The waiters recoiled with horror from before that deadly weapon.

The officer arose to his feet, glared at the revolver a moment or two, and then glided out of the house. He had no stomach for bullets.

"Whoop!" yelled Dwyer, "whose funeral is this going to be, anyhow? Step up, Mr. Corpse, and select your coffin."

Despite the gravity of the situation, the crowd laughed.

"Now, look here, gentlemen," said Duncan, "that waiter came up to us and demanded our order. We had just taken four drinks at the bar, so Mr. Dwyer told him to clear out. He seized him, called him a bummer, and was going to put him out, when I knocked him down. That's all there is of it. I won't be arrested for that, and the policeman who attempts to do it will be hurt."

"Hurrah for Dix!" cried Hank Howard, to which the crowd responded with a yell that was heard several blocks away.

"Takes seats, gentlemen!" cried the proprietor. "There's no harm done. The gentleman was right. Give your orders, gentlemen!"

The crowd laughed again, and the business of the place went on more vigorously than ever, while a dozen or more crowded

around Duncan and Dwyer to congratulate them on their success in dealing with the insulting waiter.

While they were thus conversing and drinking more wine, the officer whose nose had been so put out of joint by Duncan, returned with two other officers, and elbowed their way through the crowd.

"There he is—that dark man there," he said, pointing toward Duncan.

"You are my prisoner, sir," said the sergeant, laying a hand on Dick's shoulder.

"What for?" Dick demanded.

"For striking him whilst in the discharge of his duty."

"But he was not discharging his duty," said Dick.

"You must prove that in court to-morrow morning."

Dick turned, and when no one was suspecting it, dealt the officer a blow that felled him to the floor.

Then, in the confusion that ensued he and Dwyer escaped from the hall to the street, leaving the officers and the men around the table where they were found engaged in a free fight.

The excitement had completely sobered both Duncan and Dwyer.

"I am sorry you have got into this trouble on my account," said the genial minstrel.

"No matter," was the reply, "that fellow deserved all he got."

"But the police will make New York too hot to hold you, unless you buy 'em off."

"Buy 'em off?"

"Yes—see the captain and sergeant and pay 'em something to let you alone."

"Oh, you don't mean it!"

"Yes, I do. I've done it many a time. They're all on the make."

"Well, let's go to some hotel and go to bed. I like you, Dwyer, and will stand by you. How are you fixed?"

"Had fifty dollars this morning. Some fellow has gone through me for every cent of it."

"Here's fifty more—come along—when you get as rich as Vanderbilt you can pay it back."

Billy was astonished.

"Take it," said Duncan. "I am flush just now, you know."

"All right," said Dwyer, taking the money. "I owe you fifty. I make one hundred a week when I play."

"Come on, then. Let's get away before the police get after us again."

Dwyer led the way into a little hotel on a side street, where he was well acquainted with the night clerk, whom he had given many a ticket to the minstrel performances, and called for a room for himself and friend.

"If the police inquire here for us, we ain't in, Jimmy," he said.

"What have you been up to?" the clerk asked.

"Knocked down a cop," said Billy.

"Good!" said the clerk, "served him right. Did you give him a black eye?"

"Yes."

The clerk grinned with delight and showed them the way to the room.

They were but a few minutes in bed when there was a loud rap on the door, and a hoarse voice demanded:

"Open this door!"

"The police!" gasped Dwyer, springing out of bed.

## CHAPTER XVI.

### THE ESCAPE—A GUZZLING CROWD.

The knocking on the door demonstrated that a determined man was outside there. Dick dreaded falling into the hands of the police, fearing his identity would be suspected.



"Will you open this door!" demanded the voice outside, in the sternest of tones.

"Who are you?" demanded Dick, as he and Dwyer hastily dressed themselves.

"Open this door and find out," was the reply.

"I say, Billy!"

Dwyer recognized the voice of the clerk of the hotel.

"Helloo, Jimmy!" he said.

"Open the door. It's all right. They'll break it down if you don't."

"Well, it isn't my hotel," said Dwyer. "They can break the whole house down if they want to. I won't open the door till I am dressed to receive company. You know I always was bashful, Jimmy."

Jimmy and two or three others were heard to chuckle. Everybody knew Billy Dwyer, and liked him, though he would go about drunk for weeks at a time.

"Hurry up!" whispered Billy, "and we'll give 'em the slip."

"Just let me get off," said Duncan. "It's me they want, not you. Don't you get yourself into trouble on my account."

"Just wipe off your chin and watch me fool 'em," said Dwyer, who had taken a liking to Duncan. "I never go back on a friend."

"But how can you get away?"

"As easy as you can."

Dick smiled.

"I guess you are right."

"Have you got a good grip in your hands?" Billy asked.

"Yes."

"Then you are all right. We'll go down the lightning-rod which runs just by the window there. I noticed it when I opened the window for fresh air just before we went to bed."

"That's all right, then," and Dick went to the window to examine the lightning-rod.

"Well, you go first. I'll palaver with those fellows till you reach the ground."

Dick reached out against the brick wall and caught the rod firmly. He then swung himself out of the window and commenced letting himself down hand over hand.

Ere he reached the ground he looked up and saw Dwyer descending. Promptly dropping to terra firma, he waited for the gallant minstrel, and when he had him by his side he asked in a whisper:

"Where shall we go now?"

"Come on, we are all right now," and Dwyer led off toward the North river, followed by Duncan.

They walked leisurely along arm in arm till they reached the river.

"Now, there's a little tavern up the street here," said Dwyer, "where we'll be all right. It isn't first-class like the Fifth Avenue, but it's safe, and that's what we want, you know."

"Yes, that's what we want. Go ahead. I'll follow where you lead."

"Good—I'm the middle man this time. Come on."

They went up two blocks and stopped before a corner liquor store with "Hotel" in gilt letters over the door.

There were quite a number of hard-looking characters in the place when they entered, late as it was, who stared at the two well-dressed young men as though their appearance in such a place was an unusual thing.

"Can you give us a room to-night, landlord?" Duncan asked of the man behind the bar.

"Yes—what'll you have to drink?" was the reply.

"Have you got anything that won't kill at first shot?" Duncan asked.

"Oh, yes, I guess I have."

"Well, give us some champagne, then."

"Champagne be hanged!" growled the landlord. "I don't keep no old shams in my house. Rum, gin, whisky and brandy. Take your choice."

The bummers and loafers pricked up their ears at the idea of two men coming there and calling for champagne.

"Guess they be swell chaps," whispered one to another.

"Nah, they're snide," said the other. "Never drank no champagne in ther lives."

"Make me a whisky punch," said Dwyer.

"The same for me," said Dick, nodding his head to the bartender.

"For two or the crowd?" the landlord asked, looking around at the score of bleary-eyed bummers.

"I'll take mine straight," cried half a dozen, as the entire party made a rush for the bar.

"Gimme a rum sour!"

"Brandy stiff!"

"Whisky straight!"

"The old thing, Cully!"

"Gimme a gin sling!" and a dozen other kinds of drinks were vociferously called for by the thirsty bummers.

Dick had never before seen such a gang, and was at first inclined to resent the inclination.

"Is it for the crowd, gentlemen?" the landlord asked, whom a long experience at that kind of dodge had rendered cautious. He would have the positive order of the man who was to pay for the liquor before he would deal out a drop of the vile stuff.

"Of course; can't you whoop up a few more?" replied Billy, who was not new to such scenes. "Blow a horn and call in a few more."

The bummers laughed, but the landlord walked around from behind the counter, went to the door and gave a loud, long whistle.

"My business is to sell liquor," he said, as he went back behind the counter, "and the more drinkers around the better business is."

By the time he was done speaking some thirty tramps, who had been sleeping in a neighboring lumber yard, came in, dressed in every state of dilapidation.

Even Dwyer himself was astonished, and the amazement of Duncan was indescribable. Such a hard-looking lot he had never seen before in all his life. They crowded in, scratching like so many monkeys, and Dick and Billy gave way before them.

"I say, landlord," said Billy, "give us a show, won't you?"

"Yes—come around here behind the bar, and face your good friends."

"Good—thanks. You have a large circle of relatives, I see. How comes it that all your relations are so poor, landlord?"

This retort of Billy's set the landlord aback for a moment, which the bummers saw, and a laugh at his expense was the result.

"Don't go back on us, cousin," cried one, amid a roar of laughter.

"Make mine stiff, uncle," said another.

"Be kind to us, daddy," yelled a third, and thus the badinage went on till the landlord yelled out:

"Hyer, yer suckers! Stop this noise or yer don't git nothin'."

That was enough. A silence like that of the grave fell upon the thirsty crowd. Duncan and Dwyer gazed upon them from their position behind the bar, and read whole catalogues of crime in their bloated faces.

At last the bartender finished preparing the drinks, and the crowd began the scramble to get them. They were handed out with dexterous rapidity, and in a very short time seventy drinks were guzzled.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### A NEW DANGER—"DOWN YOU GO."

"Seventy drinks—seven dollars," said the landlord, turning to Dwyer.



"How can forty-seven men take seventy drinks?" Dwyer asked.

He had counted the number present, and was prepared to resist further imposition.

"Ha-ha-ha!" chuckled the liquor-seller, "look at them guzzlers. I'll bet a thousand dollars they can drink a thousand drinks in one hour."

"Whoop!" yelled one of the tramps from the lumber yard, "take 'im up, boss! We can't do no sich thing!"

"Yes—bet him! Scoop in his money. We can't do it."

"I am not much on the bet," said Dwyer. "Haven't got a thousand dollars. If I had I'd take the bet, if for no other reason than to rid you of your poor relations. Here's all the money I have," handing him a ten-dollar bill; take your seven dollars out of that, and show us up to our room."

The landlord took the bill and slipped it into his pocket.

"Seven dollars for drinks," he said, "and three dollars for a bed for two—that's right—ten dollars. Becky!"

A stout, red-faced woman of all work appeared.

"Show these gentlemen up to number seven."

The woman took up a lighted candle and marched out of the room. Billy and Dick followed her, and up two flights of rickety old stairs were shown into a dilapidated-looking room, with one bed and two windows.

The woman placed the candle on the mantel and retired without a word.

Dwyer went to the door and shut it.

The lock was both boltless and keyless.

"Oh, this is snide," said Dwyer, a look of disgust on his face.

"What's that?" Duncan asked.

"Can't fasten the door," replied Dwyer.

"Well, we can push the bed against it."

"Yes, that's so. Let's do it."

Dwyer stood at the head of the bed and Duncan at the foot. They lifted the bed clear of the floor and carried it against the door.

"Now, I guess we are safe," said Dwyer, as he glanced around the room to see if there was any other way of getting in or out.

"Yes; there's no other way that I can see," remarked Duncan, as he commenced undressing. "I say, Dwyer, that landlord has a hard cheek, hasn't he?"

"Regular flint," replied the minstrel, "and his gang is just as tough."

"I should say so. If I had objected to treating that crowd they'd have fired us out quicker than lightning; I knew that in a moment."

"I guess you are right. I would not like to meet such a crowd again. They must be pretty near all thieves."

"Every man of them. There's not an honest man in the crowd."

"Many more like them in New York?"

"Thousands."

"What's the cause of it?"

"Whisky, I guess," was the candid reply.

"Do you really think so?"

"Of course—why do you ask?"

"Because I can't understand why sober men will drink when they see such results every day."

"Ha-ha-ha!" laughed Dwyer, "that is easily accounted for. No moderate drinker ever dreams of becoming a drunkard. Soldiers in battle take their chances, but every man expects the other fellow to get hit while he gets off unhurt."

"I guess you are right. You were pretty full to-night. Do you often get so?"

Dwyer looked at the dark-featured young man as if trying to read the thoughts that prompted the question.

"Yes," he said. "I get dead drunk pretty often. Do you?"

"Never but two or three times in my life," said Duncan, a

shadow of sadness coming into his face, "and I have bitterly regretted that I ever tasted a drop of liquor of any kind."

"Oh, I've sworn off a thousand times, and turned over new leaves until there are no more in the book to turn. But it's no use. When I get with the boys and want a little fun, we get to drinking, and then we make things howl."

"But doesn't it hurt your reputation——"

"Oh, Lord!" and Billy Dwyer burst into a hoarse laugh. "Reputation! Why, if you want to kill a man's chances in New York call him a temperance man. At least, that's the case in the crowd I run with."

Duncan smiled.

"I guess you've been running with a bad crowd," he said, as he got into bed.

"Well, I don't know about that. There are some pretty good fellows in the profession," and Dwyer rolled himself in the sheets for a nap.

Dick lay awake a long time thinking over the situation. He was in the deepest distress.

"Oh, if I had never drunk any wine," he moaned, "I would now be at home with my friends and her whom I love better than life. But I drank, and now here I am, hunted like a wild beast, and the only friend I have is one who is a slave to the bowl, though of noble impulses and generous hearted. If I keep with him I shall drink as he does, and become an out-cast—a drunkard."

By this time Dwyer was snoring like a saw mill.

"How am I to sleep under such a noise?" muttered Duncan. "I never heard a man snore so vigorously."

He tried hard to sleep, but it was the first time in his life he ever had a snoring bedfellow, so he tried in vain to court the drowsy god.

Suddenly he heard stealthy footsteps outside the room door, and in another moment the door was pushed against. The bed prevented it from opening, and a muttered curse was heard outside.

"Cuss 'em!" growled the voice; "we'll have to take the ladder. They've got the bed agin the door."

Then Dick heard them retreating, and the snoring of the minstrel went on.

"Lucky thing we placed the bed against the door," he muttered, and then he lay still, listening to hear anything else that was to follow.

Happening to look toward the window, he saw the end of a ladder against the window sill.

"Ah, I understand what was meant by the ladder now," he said. "They are going to rob us at all hazards. Well, I'll see about that. They think this snoring is enough for two men, and conclude that both are asleep. Well, I will wake 'em up," and getting softly out of bed, he went to the window, and peeped out.

Two men were ascending the ladder. The foremost was the bartender of the hotel.

He waited till the first man's head was even with the window sill, when he suddenly threw up the window and said:

"Do you want to come in?"

"N—no!" gasped the astonished man.

"What do you want there?"

"I—I—want—to go down," was the stammering reply.

"All right—down with you then!" and seizing the end of the ladder Duncan shoved it outward till it went over like an immense tree falling.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### THE MIDNIGHT TRAGEDY.

At the ladder went over, the two men gave wild shrieks, and the next moment the crash came.

Two men ran out from under the shadow of the house and



picked up the two men who were on the ladder. Duncan saw them from the window, and noticed that the men were very anxious to get them away as quickly as possible.

"I tell you they are both dead!" Duncan heard one of the men say.

"Then we must get them out of the way—quick, to the river with 'em!"

Each seized a man and rushed across the street toward the dock.

"My God!" cried Dick. "They're only stunned—they will be drowned!"

But he was too agitated to say anything to prevent the terrible deed and in another minute or so he heard two splashes in the water, and knew that the two men's fate was sealed forever.

The assassins then ran back and drew the ladder across the street to the side of the pier.

"That will be another mystery of New York," muttered Dick, as he stood there and gazed out upon the scene of the tragedy. "Their fate will never be known, for those who know it will say nothing. Oh, it's horrible! In less than a week I have been either directly or indirectly the cause of the death of three human beings. But for wine I would be in Swandown to-night, free from care, and happy. There is death in the bowl. Will I meet my fate there? Where am I going? How can I break this terrible chain of circumstances around me?"

How long he would have remained there, musing over the horrors of his situation, he knew not, for he was too much excited even to think about sleep. But there came a gentle knocking at the door.

Dwyer sprang up in bed, and exclaimed:

"Halloo—who is that?"

"It's me—open the door," replied a voice, evidently belonging to a female.

"Wait a moment," said Dwyer, getting out of bed and preparing to pull the heavy bedstead away from the wall.

"Dwyer," whispered Duncan, clutching his arm, "don't open that door!"

"Why not?"

"Dangerous."

"How so?"

"They are trying to rob us."

"But they can't do it when we are wide awake," said Dwyer.

"There's a dozen men out there, all armed to the teeth. I've already killed two of them."

"Oh, the devil! What are you giving me, anyhow?"

Duncan hurriedly led him to the window and explained.

Dwyer's eyes almost popped out of his head with astonishment. He was not a coward, by any means.

The knocking was gently resumed.

"Go away, Daisy," said Dwyer, in his blandest tones, "and come again when the sun shines. I am all undressed, and can't find my clothes in the dark."

"Open the door, please!" pleaded the voice.

"Can't do it—go away, darling."

"D—nation!" growled a hoarse voice, "if you don't open this door I'll break it down!"

"Then there'll be several little funerals around here. We have got but a pair of revolvers, but they're good ones."

"I want to see you fellows."

"You can see us early in the morning," said Dwyer.

"But I must see you now."

"Oh, that's all right. You had better go away or I'll open fire on you through the door."

"But what are you afraid of?"

"Oh, nothing. Two or three shots will bring the police. You don't want any police around here, you know."

That seemed to silence the party outside, but they remained by the door whispering excitedly.

"Say!" called Dwyer, "if you fellows don't go away and let us get some sleep there'll be a funeral from this house to-morrow."

"You open this door!" demanded the hoarse voice again.

"I have paid for this room," said Dwyer, "and now I am going to protect my rights to it. When I count five I will open fire if you are not gone."

And then Billy commenced counting.

When he had pronounced the word three there was a stampede among a number on the outside.

"Ha-ha-ha!" laughed Dwyer, "the cowards! There must have been a dozen of them. We can go to bed now."

"No," said Duncan, "I won't close my eyes in a place like this. It's only two hours till daylight now. You lie down and I'll watch by the window."

"Well, I'll sit up with you;" and the two dressed themselves and sat in chairs in the middle of the room, waiting for the light of day.

"This is a bad place," said Duncan. "What do they want to get into the room for, now that they know we are awake, I wonder?"

"They want to wipe us out for fear we will give it away, and have the house pulled," replied Dwyer.

"But I am as anxious to keep it dark as they are," remarked Dick.

"But they don't believe that."

"Suppose I tell them so?"

"They would just laugh at you. No; wait till daylight, and then we can get away all right."

They did wait for the dawn of day, and then they began to cogitate.

"How can we get out without a fight?" was the question that was uppermost in their minds.

They feared that when they attempted to leave the room they would be pounced upon by the assassins, and stabbed to death, their bodies hidden until night, when the river would be the convenient receptacle of the bloody deed.

"We'll wait till an officer passes," said Dwyer, "and then we'll hail him and claim his protection."

"That would be a good idea," said Duncan. "But we'll have to wait till after sunrise before we can see one, I guess."

"We'll keep a watch for them, anyhow."

An hour passed, and sunrise greeted them. They kept a watch at the window.

"By George!" exclaimed Dwyer, "here comes a whole squad of police. It must be the police relief guard."

"Maybe they have come to arrest me," said Duncan, turning pale, as he glanced out at the blue-coated minions of the law.

## CHAPTER XIX.

### THE RESCUE—SAVED BY THE POLICE.

At the sight of the police Dick Duncan's heart sank like a lump of lead in his bosom. He recognized his danger at once, for if he fell into their hands he would be dealt with for having resisted an officer in the discharge of his duty, and in the trial there would be very great danger of his being recognized as the alleged murderer of Ardell. On the other hand, to remain there in that den of thieves and cut-throats, he was in danger of being killed by those who wished to conceal the crime of the night before.

Billy Dwyer had no such fear of the police on his mind, hence he hailed their appearance as a deliverance from a great danger.

"Don't call them, Dwyer," said Duncan, as he saw that the famous minstrel was about to call the little squad of policemen.



"The devil!" exclaimed Dwyer, in some surprise. "Why not?"

"Because I don't want to fall into their clutches," was the reply. "You know they were looking for me last night."

"Yes, I know," said Billy, scratching his head and looking quite dubious, "but you see we are in a tight place just now."

"So we are, but not any more so than we were last night, I guess."

"Yes, we are. The police won't kill us, while those fellows downstairs will, if they get a chance. I don't think those officers out there know anything about our racket last night, as we are in another ward altogether. I'll call the officers up, and if they do recognize you, why ten dollars each will make it all right. Helloo, officers!"

Dwyer called from the window and Dick sprang back out of view, his heart fluttering like a caged bird.

"Well, what is it?" the sergeant of the squad asked, stopping and looking up at the window.

"Come up here a moment, two of you. There's something here in your line."

The sergeant took one of his men with him, and left the others standing on the sidewalk. Entering the place he found the barroom empty. The barkeeper had dodged out of the way, as had the proprietor. The way was clear. The sergeant and his man promptly ascended the stairs and knocked at the door of the room in which our two heroes were.

Dwyer opened the door as Duncan pulled the bed away, and the two officers entered the room.

"What's the trouble here?" the sergeant asked.

"We want protection in getting out of this place," said Dwyer.

"What's the matter? Can't you leave it unmolested?"

"We are afraid to undertake it. You see, a gang downstairs swore they'd lick us when we came down this morning, and——"

"But there isn't a soul downstairs," interrupted the sergeant.

"Oh, that's because we hailed you. They were laying for us."

"What's the trouble between you and them?"

"Oh, they tried to go through us last night," said Dwyer, "but we kept them out, and they swore they'd fix us when we came out this morning."

"And is that all you called us up for?" the sergeant asked, with an incredulous look on his face.

"Yes, that's all," said Dwyer, a broad grin on his face. "Of course, there's nothing mean about us. We'll set up the beer or champagne. You can have a good time on this when you go off duty," and with that he handed them a ten-dollar bill each, which they grabbed with a hungry eagerness.

"Oh, yes," said the sergeant; "that's all right. We'll show you down and see that the gang does not trouble you. Come on," and leading the way the sergeant retraced his footsteps and passed down to the street again, followed by Dwyer and Duncan and the other policeman.

Both drew a long breath of relief as they reached the sidewalk.

"You are all right now, I guess," said the sergeant.

"Yes—good day—much obliged to you," said Dwyer, promptly leading off down the street, with Duncan close to his side.

The police turned, and went the other way—the way they were going when Dwyer hailed them.

"You did that well, Dwyer," said Dick, a smile on his dark, handsome face, "much better than I could have done. You have saved me from their clutches."

"Oh, it's easy enough when you know how to do it," said the minstrel, laughing. "They are not such bad fellows after all. They appreciate a ten-dollar bill as much as anybody else when tendered in a manner that does not offend."

"Of course I can't let you lose that twenty dollars—here are

two tens," and Duncan drew two ten-dollar bills from his pocket and tendered them to Billy.

"I won't take them," said Billy, with flat-footed emphasis.

"But you must take it, my good friend," said Duncan. "I cannot let you pay out twenty dollars for myself that way."

"Why, it was your money I gave them!"

"No, it wasn't. It was your money—money I loaned you. You must remember that I have plenty of money, and can afford to lose thousands where you cannot afford to part with a dollar," and with that Dick shoved the two bills into Dwyer's hand, and added: "Now, we want some breakfast. Where can we find it?"

"Guess we'd better jump on a car and go downtown. Plenty of restaurants and hotels down there."

"Very well—let's get away from this part of town as quickly as possible. I don't want to get into any more trouble, and have the police after me again."

"I don't think there is any danger," remarked Dwyer.

"We might come across some of those fellows, and a few words will lead to a fight. That's the only danger. If I get into any more trouble the police of the entire city will be put on my track."

Dwyer laughed, and said:

"You had better let me go and see if I can't fix the captain of the district, and have the matter dropped."

"Of course, if there is any possible chance of doing so."

"Oh, there's plenty of chances. The price is everything. It may take two or three hundred dollars to do it, though."

"You can have a thousand if necessary."

"Well, I'll go up and see about it after we have had some breakfast. Here comes a car. Let's get in and go downtown."

They hailed the car and got in. Duncan seated himself near a lady, and Dwyer stood on the front platform.

On the next corner below two policemen got on the car. Duncan looked up and saw that one of them was the officer he had knocked down the day before.

## CHAPTER XX.

### ARRESTED—ESCAPE—DRINKING—ROBBED.

The officer saw and recognized Dick at the same time, and at once whispered to his brother officer.

Dick was alarmed, but he kept his seat and resolved to face the danger as calmly as possible.

Thinking him a very dangerous person, the two officers advanced upon him with their drawn clubs.

"Your name is Dix," said the officer. "You are my prisoner."

The lady near his side gave a little feminine scream, and hastily moved to the other side of the car.

"Yes," said Duncan, "that's my name. I am guilty of giving a policeman a black eye. I am ready to go with you and pay the fine."

One of the officers rang the bell, and the car stopped.

They got out, and Billy Dwyer did the same. He knew one of the officers—had known him a long time.

"Halloo, Baker!" he said to the officer.

"Halloo, Billy!" returned the officer. "How is it you are not full as usual this morning?"

"Haven't had time to get full yet," was Dwyer's reply. "Just got up."

"Pretty full last night, eh?"

"Yes—yes, Baker, you're in luck this morning, old fellow."

"How so?"

"Struck it rich—fifty each for you and your pard."

"How?" and Baker became quite confidential in his attitude toward the famous minstrel.



"You've got my friend in tow there. Let him go and I'll make him give a cool hundred to both of you."

"Has he got the pile?"

"Yes—fifty each."

"Yes."

"It's a bargain, then. Tell your pard to take his hands off, and we'll fix it all right."

Baker turned and half whispered to his brother officer, and the latter released his hold on the prisoner.

"Have you got a hundred with you, Dix?" Dwyer asked.

"I don't know—will see," said Dick, feeling in his pocket. "I have got but eighty dollars—here it is."

"I've got some," said Billy, and adding another twenty to the eighty, he slipped it into Baker's hand, and then the two immaculate guardians of the law marched on up the street, leaving Dwyer and Duncan to pursue their way in peace.

"Ha-ha-ha!" chuckled the minstrel, as the two officers turned a corner, "we'd better go and get some breakfast before some other officer picks us up and takes our last dollar."

"Yes, let's have a good square meal anyhow. After that I'll go to the bank and get more money. But I'd like to know just where this thing is going to end. I may be arrested two or three times every day, and have to pay out as often."

"We'll fix that with the captain," said Dwyer. "How would you like a good breakfast of oysters?"

"Would like 'em first-rate."

"There's an oyster saloon on that corner over there. Let's go in there and have a good fry."

They went over to the saloon and ordered oysters, and while waiting for them Dwyer ordered a glass of champagne for Duncan and took a whisky straight for himself.

"I don't think I ought ever to drink another drop of wine," said Dick. "That has been the cause of all my troubles."

"Yes, but I don't think a glass before breakfast would hurt you," remarked Dwyer. "I have got you in charge now and will see that you don't get into any more scrapes. You don't understand the art of drinking so as to get the most good out of the stuff."

"Oh, I know that if I had never drunk any wine or other liquors I would not have been in this scrape."

"Well, I'll be hanged if I ever heard a sport talk that way before," and Dwyer turned and looked him squarely in the face. "What's the matter with you, anyhow?"

"Oh, there's nothing the matter with me," said Dick, "only I am conscious of having made a fool of myself, that's all," and fearing that he might betray himself by further lamentation, he wisely refrained from any further remarks on the subject. They both drank what was placed before them, and then turned to discuss the oysters which soon followed.

Dwyer drank deeply, of course, and soon forgot all about his proposed visit to the police captain for the purpose of arranging a peace between the force and Duncan Dix, as they knew our hero. The result was a spree which carried them to the lower end of the city, among the rum shops and dens where the famous minstrel was well known. There they drank deeply of all sorts of liquors, and got so beastly drunk that a gang of ruffians relieved them of every cent of money they had about them.

Unconscious of the robbery, Dwyer led the way into another saloon and called for more drinks.

"Everybody (hic) drink," he said, looking around at a half score of hangers-on about the place.

They made a rush to the bar and clamored for their respective drinks.

toward the man who had ordered the treat, as if waiting for his pay.

Dwyer set down his glass and began fumbling in his pocket for the change. He searched first in one pocket and then another, and was astonished that he found no money.

Seeing how slow he was in producing his money, the barkeeper said, quite sharply:

"One dollar and a quarter, sir."

"Been (hic) robbed, by George!" said Dwyer, looking at Duncan.

Dick quickly felt in his own pockets and made the same disagreeable discovery.

"So have I," he said, equally astonished.

"See here, you loafer!" cried the barkeeper, indignantly, "pay for those drinks, or I'll smash you!" and he shook a brawny fist in the minstrel's face.

"I've been robbed," said Dwyer, partially sobered by the danger that menaced him.

"That's too thin," sneered the mixer of drinks. "You can't come that old dodge on me. That trick was played on Noah in the Ark, and the joker was thrown out to drown. Pay for those drinks, old bum, or it'll be the worse for you."

Dwyer looked around among the bummers to see if anyone there knew him.

"I'll give a check for it," said Dick.

"Check be hanged!" roared the barkeeper. "Got millions in the bank, I suppose, and yet can't pay for drinks! How many banks have you fellows got, anyhow?"

"I can buy out your old bar," said Dick, indignantly.

"Guess you could, but I ain't selling out on credit. Cash down and no dodging. Here—pay up, sir!" and the barkeeper seized Dwyer by the collar and shook him savagely.

That was more than Dick could stand. He struck the barkeeper a powerful blow on the ear which sent him reeling half way across the room.

Then the row commenced. The bummers pitched in promiscuously, and a general free fight was the result.

As usual in barroom fights no man cared particularly whose head he punched. It was a free fight, and a free fight in a barroom means free whisky to anybody who chooses to help himself. They did help themselves. A bummer would seize a bottle of whisky, turn it up and empty it, and then break it over the head of the one nearest to him. This made things lively, and in a few minutes the liquors were pretty well gone and the till penhiless.

But the fight was a terrible one for a few minutes. The burly bartender recovered from the staggering blow Duncan gave him, and pitched in, striking right and left, knocking Dwyer all in a heap the first blow, and sending Dick reeling away another.

Dick closed with him, and a desperate rough-and-tumble struggle ensued, during which the bummers helped themselves to the contents of the bar.

But the police came in, and the battle of clubs began.

Heads were thumped as though they were made for that particular exercise, and blood streamed down the faces of many of the combatants.

One of the policemen yanked Billy Dwyer out of the wriggling mass of angry fighters, and recognized him.

"Halloo, Billy!" he exclaimed, shaking him up. "What are you up to, eh?"

"Let me get at him!" roared Dwyer, in a terrible rage. "I'll crawl down his throat and make him sick!"

"Here, hold up, Bill," and the officer rubbed his club close to Billy's nose.

Dwyer suddenly looked up and saw that the police had him.

"I'll give you ten dollars to let me get one more whack at the loafer."

"Be still, Billy!" ordered the officer, while his comrades of the club pitched in and dispersed the bummers and arrested Dick and the bartender.

## CHAPTER XXI.

### THE PLEDGE AND THE BETRAYAL.

The bartender promptly put forth the drinks for the party and waited till they were drunk by the loafers, when he turned



"What's all this about?" the officer demanded of the bartender, whom he well knew.

"That bumner there," he replied, pointing to Dwyer, "came in here and ordered drinks for the crowd which he couldn't pay for. I went for him, and this here loafer," pointing to Duncan, "gave me a clip on the ear."

"How is this, Billy?" the officer asked, turning to Dwyer.

"I had over twenty dollars in my pocket when I came in," said Dwyer, "and when I went to pay for the drinks my money was gone. Some cuss had gone through me."

"Who is your friend?"

"He is a friend of mine," replied Billy, loth to give him away, "who has money enough in bank to buy this thing a dozen times."

"I fear I will have to run you and your friend in, Billy."

"Very well; I am willing to go."

"Who is this man?" the bartender asked, looking at Dwyer.

"I am Billy Dwyer, the minstrel," said Dwyer, "as good a man as you will ever be, even when you die and go to Heaven."

"Why, hang it all!" exclaimed the bartender; "why didn't you tell me your name? I wouldn't have said a word about it!"

"Because you didn't ask me."

"Well, let it go, officer, and—"

"I can't do that. You've had a big time here, and somebody must go up for it. What's your name, sir?" and he turned abruptly to Duncan.

"My name is not necessary," was the reply. "If I have done anything worthy of arrest, it is your business to arrest me."

"I will arrest you, then, barkeeper and all," and they were all accordingly marched off to the station-house, save those who escaped on the first appearance of the police.

Dwyer and Dick were locked up together. The court would not sit until 10 o'clock the next day, so they were compelled to remain in the cell all the afternoon and night.

The situation had sobered both of them, and they were correspondingly depressed. Dwyer didn't care so much, as he had been on such sprees before, and had been in limbo quite a number of times; but with Dick Duncan it was quite different.

He well knew that he would be recognized as Duncan Dix, who had knocked down a policeman and baffled others. He feared that it would lead to his recognition as Dick Duncan, the alleged murderer of Jim Ardell, at the "Temple of Mirth."

"I wouldn't let it trouble me so much," said Dwyer, seeing how distressed he was. "It will be only a fine for being drunk and disorderly, which you can very easily pay, and go off rejoicing."

"You forget that they have another charge against me, which might go very serious with me."

"What is it—resisting an officer?"

"Yes."

"Oh, I guess we can fix that;" and the famous minstrel spoke hopefully. "The officer can be bought to swear that it wasn't much of a 'resist,' nohow, and that will settle it."

"Well, if I ever get out of this, you may look upon me as one of the straightest teetotal temperance men that ever lived. I am going to sign the pledge, and keep it as long as I live."

"Then you won't have any more fun," said Dwyer.

"Well, I did have plenty of fun when I didn't touch a drop," was the reply. "But as soon as I commenced drinking I got into trouble. If we hadn't drunk any liquor at our breakfast this morning, we wouldn't have been here now. I've had enough of it, and now, before you and high Heaven, I swear that not another drop of the cursed stuff shall ever pass my lips!"

Dwyer seemed awed by the fierce earnestness of Duncan, and glared at him in silence.

"That's a strong oath," he finally said, in low tones, "and it won't hurt you to keep it. I'd take it myself if I believed I

could keep it a week. I've turned over several new leaves in my time, but somehow the old love came back on me too strongly to be resisted. I suppose my life is to be a short and a merry one."

"I don't know how long it may last with me," said Duncan, "but I am resolved that the balance of my life shall be a sober one, at all events."

The long night in the cell came to an end at last, and the prisoners were arraigned in the police court. A dozen or more of old drunks were disposed of, and then Billy Dwyer's case was called.

The news of his arrest had gone out, and scores of his friends came forward to aid and sympathize with him. His well-known gentleness of disposition, and equally well-known integrity, saved him from being fined, and he was discharged with a reprimand from the judge.

"Duncan-Dix!" cried the court officer, and the name, being thus unexpectedly called, caused poor Dick to sink almost through the floor. They had discovered his identity. The officers had recognized him.

He arose and faced the judge.

"You are charged with being drunk and disorderly yesterday when arrested. Are you guilty or not guilty?"

"I am guilty," was the firm reply. "I was drunk. The barkeeper seized my friend, and I struck him, and that, of course, was disorderly. It was not only disorderly, but was my last drunk, if your Honor will allow me to say as much. I am satisfied as to the result of drinking liquor."

"You talk like an honest, sensible man," said the judge, "and I am disposed to let you go this time. But there is another charge of resisting an officer in the discharge of his duty. How about that?"

"I guess it's true, judge. I was drunk. God helping me, I'll never drink again."

Tears stood in the eyes of the judge. He had been a wild young man himself, and had not forgotten the temptations of his youth.

"Young man," he said, "I well know how you feel. I am sure you will never again appear in a court of this character under such charges. Beware of the bowl. It blights the fairest reputations, and carries many men down to hell. You are discharged, and may—"

"Judge!" cried a voice in the crowd of spectators, "that man is Dick Duncan, who killed Ardell!"

Dick wheeled around, and glared in the direction of the voice. He could not see the man, but he recognized the voice of Jared Harkins, his cousin.

## CHAPTER XXII.

### THE DISCOVERY—ARRESTED FOR MURDER.

The accusation, coming as it did, fell like a thunderclap on both judge and spectators. Everybody seemed to hold his breath, and every eye was riveted on the prisoner.

He reeled for a moment, as if staggered by the sudden charge, but in another moment he was calm as a May morning, returning the gaze of the judge.

"How is this?" the judge asked. "Are you Dick Duncan, of Swandown?"

"Let my accuser come forward and answer that question," said Dick, calmly. "I have answered to another name here this morning."

"That's true—who says this man's name is Richard Duncan?" and the judge looked over the audience in search of the accuser.

There was a profound silence for several moments, and then an officer stepped forward, and said:

"May it please your Honor, I am quite sure this man is Dick



"Duncan, who has dyed his face and hands to disguise himself."

"Are you the man who accused him just now?" the judge asked.

"No, sir."

"Do you personally know Richard Duncan?"

"No, sir."

"How then can you say that you are quite sure of this man being Richard Duncan in disguise?"

"From a photograph in my possession and a description all the police in this city have of him," replied the officer, looking Dick squarely in the eyes.

Dick's heart sank like lead in his bosom, but he presented an outward appearance of perfect self-possession.

"Let me see the picture," said the judge, extending the hand nearest the officer to get it.

The officer handed up the picture, and the judge closely scanned it, glancing first at the prisoner.

"Step nearer, Mr. Dix," he said, and Dick advanced close to the judge's stand.

"The eyes, nose and forehead are yours," the judge remarked, as he again looked up from the photograph. "There is no beard on this face. When was the picture taken, officer?"

"The artist says it was taken a little over two months ago," was the reply.

"Then if that be true that must be a false beard he wears, for no man could grow such a beard in even six months' time. Examine his beard, officer."

The officer went up to him and pulled his beard.

It came off in his hand!

The judge and all the spectators uttered exclamations of surprise.

Dick calmly gazed around the excited faces. He recognized the fate that was closing in upon him, and thought he saw the shadow of the gallows looming up in the distance. But he was calm now. The greater the danger the cooler he was.

"Are you Richard Duncan?" the judge asked, the second time.

"Yes," he replied. "I have not denied it. I recognized that voice back there just now as the man who first led me to drink wine. He is a kinsman. I am not guilty of the murder of Mr. Ardell. I simply defended myself from his insolence, and a half dozen others joined in. Somebody intended to stab me and killed him instead. I disguised myself and sought to cultivate the acquaintance of those who were with him that night, for the purpose of trying to get at the mystery."

Hank Howard was in the court-room, and at this he yelled:

"Hang poor Jim's murderer, boys!"

"Yes, hang him!" cried a dozen others, making a dash toward him.

The officers drew their revolvers, and kept the crowd back while the judge made out a commitment for the prisoner.

"I am sorry for you," said honest Billy Dwyer, turning and taking Dick's hand. "You stood by me. I'll stand by you."

"Thanks. I shall need all my friends now," and tears came into the honest minstrel's eyes as he listened to his words.

"I will do all I can to find out who stabbed Ardell," he said; "and you can always count on me to do anything for you in my power to do."

The constable having the commitment came up now, and, tapping him on the shoulder, said to Duncan:

"Follow me."

Dick turned and followed him between two stalwart policemen, and in a few minutes he was closely guarded and on his way to the Tombs.

The news of the arrest spread like wildfire, and in an hour from the time of the arrest the news had been telegraphed to Swandown to Upright & Co., his former employers.

"Willie," said Mr. Upright, to one of the boys in his store, "take this note to that address."

The boy took the note, and looked at the address.

It was to Leonie.

He had carried many a note from her to Dick Duncan, and knew very well what this one now meant.

He knocked at the door of the cottage.

Leonie herself opened the door.

Willie looked up at her white face, and silently handed her the note.

She tore it open, and read:

"Dick has been arrested, and is now in the Tombs in New York. I will go down in two hours. If you desire to go, be ready by that time, and I can call for you. JACOB UPRIGHT."

The room seemed to turn around with her. She gasped and clutched at space; but in another moment she recovered so far as to stagger to a chair.

"Tell—him—yes," she said, in a nollow tone of voice to Willie; and Willie darted away, his young heart bleeding for the sorrows of the lovely maiden.

"Dick in prison!" she moaned, when Willie had gone; "in that horrible Tombs! Oh, my God! they will hang him! He is innocent—he is innocent! They shall not hang him—they shall not hang him! Yes, I will go to him. I would have gone before, but I didn't know where he was."

She sprang up, and hurriedly began to arrange for the trip to New York. She had several hundred dollars of her own money, and as much more of Dick's which Upright & Co. had paid to her in accordance with his instructions.

This she would take down to New York, and employ lawyers to defend him.

Her mother had gone out to spend the afternoon. Leonie wrote a note for her, telling where she had gone, and left it on her mother's table, where she would be sure to see it. Then closing, but not locking, the door, she hastened down to the store of Upright & Co. She was so excited she could not wait for him to call around for her.

She met him, and together they repaired to the depot. The train soon came along.

"Where is Jared Harkins?" Leonie asked, as they boarded the train. "He ought to go, too."

"He is in New York, I believe," said good old Mr. Upright. "But we don't need any of his help, child. Every dollar I have in the world shall go to defend Dick Duncan, if necessary."

"Oh, thank you; you are so good!" and Leonie burst into a flood of tears.

She wept long and hysterically.

"It will do you good, child," said the good old merchant; "but you have cried enough now. Dry your eyes, and let Dick see you cheerful and hopeful."

## CHAPTER XXIII.

### THE MEETING OF THE LOVERS—THE TRAITOR.

Dick Duncan was sitting in his cell in the Tombs. His head was bowed and his hands covered his face. His whole frame seemed convulsed with a great sorrow.

"Oh, wine—wine" he moaned. "You have sacrificed another life. Another victim goes down in death and disgrace. I have seen others drink and no harm came of it. But I drank and fell from the beginning. Fate has ensnared me irretrievably. And he who first led me to drink was the first to accuse me. It was Jared Harkins' voice in that crowd this morning. I am not deceived. He it was who gave me into the hands of the police. That picture is one I gave to him a month ago. Oh, Jared—Jared! I looked on you as a friend—almost a brother! You knew my innocence—knew my disguise, and



"basely betrayed me!" and he rocked to and fro in an agony of distress, moaning and groaning.

"Poor Leonie! She will die of a broken heart, for she loved me as she can never love again. I wonder will she come to me now? She will—she will, for I know she will believe me innocent."

Suddenly the key turned in the door of the cell, and the kind-hearted turnkey said:

"A lady and gentleman to see you."

The door flew open, and a form appeared, which seemed like an angel to Dick Duncan. Leonie darted forward with a cry, and threw herself into his arms.

"Oh, Dick—Dick!" she cried; "you are innocent. They cannot have you!"

"Yes, my darling, I am as innocent as the angels of that man's death," he said, pressing her to his heart and covering her face with kisses.

"We all know you are, my boy," said Mr. Upright, seizing his hand and shaking it cordially, and I have come down to tell you that old Jacob Upright and his partner will stand by you to their last dollar."

Dick burst into tears.

"I don't deserve such kindness," he said. "I have been very weak, and——"

"You have been more sinned against than sinning, my boy," said the old merchant, interrupting him. "Thousands of good men have been in the same fix. You must have good lawyers, and then tell them everything about the whole affair. I will get the lawyers and have them here to see you in the morning. Have you seen Jared Harkins?"

"No, sir; I don't wish to see him," said Dick.

"Why not?"

"It was he who accused me and caused my arrest."

"My God!" gasped the old merchant; "that can't be possible!"

"But he did it, nevertheless," said Dick.

"How? Did you see him?"

"No; but I heard his voice plainly in the crowd cry out that I was Dick Duncan, the murderer."

The old merchant was astounded.

"He also gave a photograph to the police, which I had given to him only a month ago," said Dick.

"The scoundrel!" hissed the old man. "I'll make Swandown too hot to hold him after this!"

"What can be his object in doing so, dear Dick?" Leonie asked.

"I don't know. It's a mystery to me. I can't understand it. We have always been good friends."

"There is some base motive at the bottom of it, you may depend," said the old merchant, "and I will set a detective to see what it is. Tell me now, Dick, how all this thing came about."

Dick then frankly told the story of his fall and subsequent wandering down to the hour of his arrest, just as the reader has them. He omitted nothing, and Leonie wept on his bosom as he condemned himself for his weakness in touching wine.

"But I have vowed to high Heaven," he said, "never to touch another drop of any kind of liquor. I never pledged myself before, but I have now, and God helping me, I will keep it. It was not thirst but a desire to please others that made me drink."

"You were always so kind-hearted;" and Leonie threw her arms around his neck and kissed him again and again.

"I will go and see that artist, Jones," said the merchant, "and see what kind of a man he is."

"He seems to be a good kind of a fellow," said Dick, "and may not know anything more about Jared than any other man."

"Well, I'll find out, anyhow."

"But don't go now," said Dick, anxious to keep Leonie with him as long as possible.

"Dick," she said, "your voice sounds a little strange—what's the matter?"

"I had a front tooth taken out," he replied.

"Besides coloring your skin?"

"Yes; I wanted to avoid all risk of recognition."

She led him to the door where the light shone on his face; she looked at the dark olive tint, and said:

"I would have known you, Dick."

"How?"

"By your eyes and your noble appear——"

"That is your love, darling. Nobody else would have been so observing. Jared Harkins betrayed me, or I would never have been found out till after I had discovered the real murderer. He knew I had colored my skin, so he told that fact to the police, and gave them my picture."

"Oh, the base villain!" hissed the old man; "I will make him sweat for this! Everybody in Swandown is your friend, Dick, and they all believe you innocent."

"I am so glad of that; I was afraid they would think me guilty;" and Dick's face grew more cheerful.

"Another gentleman to see you, Duncan," said the turnkey, suddenly appearing at the door of the cell.

"Very well," said Dick. "Show him in. I wonder who it is?"

Jared Harkins suddenly bounded in and grasped Dick's hand.

"Dick, my boy," he said, "I am sorry—why, what's the matter?"

Dick sprang to his feet, and jerked his hand away from him, saying:

"Jared Harkins, you are a base hypocrite, villain and traitor!" and he folded his arms and glared fiercely at his cousin.

"I—I don't understand you, Dick," he stammered.

"You understand me well enough, Jared Harkins," said Dick. "It was you who first led me to drink, and got me into all sorts of trouble, and then gave my picture to the police, and accused me of the murder in the court-house this morning."

"Why, Dick, I did nothing of the kind," protested Harkins. "I have just come down from home to see you."

"Jared Harkins," said old Jacob Upright, "you have been two days in New York to my certain knowledge," and the old merchant glared at him as if he would demolish him then and there, if he could.

"That's true, but I never gave away any picture of you to anybody, nor have I seen you since the night of the murder."

"Jared, I know your voice—I would swear to your voice. You cried out in that crowd this morning that I was Dick Duncan, the murderer of Ardell. I didn't see you, but I know the voice. Again I say that you are a base villain and a traitor! Leave my presence!"

Dick pointed fiercely toward the door.

"I—I want to say——"

"Leave my presence, ere I break every bone in your body!" hissed Dick again, and in another moment the traitor was gone.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

### THE LOVERS IN THE TOMBS—THE NEW CUSTOMER.

The majestic bearing of Dick Duncan as he fiercely ordered Jared Harkins out of his cell made him appear but little less than a god in Leonie's eyes.

"Oh, Dick!" she cried, throwing herself into his arms again. "I didn't know how much I loved you till now."



"Nor did I love you so much as now," he said, pressing her to his heart.

"You did well to order him away, Dick," said Mr. Upright, "and I shall see to it that everybody in Swandown shall know what he has done. I believe he is up to some kind of desperate game. Has he ever hinted love to you, Leonie?"

"Lord, no, sir!" replied Leonie, in surprise.

"Has he any reason to want to be revenged on you for anything, Dick Duncan?"

"Not that I ever knew of," replied Dick.

"Well, it passes my comprehension," muttered the old merchant. "I can't understand it, nohow. But I'll get the best lawyers in the whole city, and let them unravel the tangled threads of this whole thing."

"I will remain in the city, dear Dick," said Leonie, as she arose to leave the cell, "and will come and see you every day. Keep up a brave heart, and all will come out right in the end."

"Now, that's the kind of a girl to have!" exclaimed the old merchant. "Keep up a brave heart. She don't tell you to cry, and that she is afraid they will hang you. You lucky dog! I've a good mind to leave you to your fate, and take her myself."

Dick smiled, and Leonie laughed outright.

"Mr. Upright," she said, "if I am ever left a widow, and you are still alive and single, I'll consider myself engaged to you."

"Good—give me your hand on that!" and the benevolent old merchant turned and grasped her pretty little hand in his. "I'll hold you to your word if you have a dozen children."

Leonie blushed, laughed, and placed her hand in his with all the confidence of a child.

"Bless you, my children!" said Dick, and all three burst into hearty laughter.

"We must go now," said Leonie, kissing him tenderly. "I will come again to-morrow," and then she took the old merchant's arm and left the cell.

"She is the light of my life!" said Dick, when the door closed on him again. "An angel. But for love of her I would not care to live."

The old merchant took her to a hotel not far from the Tombs, and engaged room and board for her.

"Have you got any money with you, child?" he asked, as he was about to leave her to go in search of a lawyer.

"Yes, sir; I have all my money, and all that of Dick's which you paid to me. I thought it would be needed, so I brought it along."

"Bless your dear heart, you will be robbed in less than two days! Give it to the proprietor for safe keeping, and take a receipt for it in the presence of witnesses." And then he left the hotel to go to a certain eminent lawyer whose card had been given him. He found the lawyer in, and, after a short conversation, retained him as counsel, paying a large fee as a retainer.

The lawyer promised to call on his client in the Tombs early on the following day, and consult with him about the defense. The old merchant went up Broadway to see Jones, the artist, and get his version of the killing of Ardell. When he arrived at the artist's rooms, he found that he was not in. A small boy was busy at some kind of rubbish work.

"Where is Mr. Jones?" he asked of the boy.

"He's gone over to the s'loon," was the reply.

"Where is that?"

The boy pointed across the street toward a well-known Broadway saloon, and the old merchant took leave and went over there.

There were a score or more of people in there, but Jared Harkins was the only man he knew of all those present. He saw him seated at a small table with another man, and a bottle of wine between them. He was talking very confidentially with the man.

"That must be that artist," said the old merchant, as he

heard them muttering in such low tones. "I'll have to wait till he gets through with him, or go up and order a picture at once before he gets drunk. Harkins is drilling him for some purpose. It won't do to let him see me, or he'll warn him to look out for me."

He suddenly turned and went out, going back to the artist's quarters, and, giving the boy a dollar, said:

"Here, bub, I don't know Mr. Jones among all those people over there in that place. Run over there and tell him a customer wishes to see him, and you may keep the dollar for yourself."

The small boy almost leaped out of his clothes. Such a big sum for so little work had never been paid him before. He sprang up and darted out of the shop, bare-headed and coatless, and, dashing into the saloon, rushed up to Jones, and said:

"Rich customer, sir, waitin' for yer!"

Jones sprang up, and abruptly left Harkins and his bottle of wine.

Harkins followed him half way across the street, overtook him, and said:

"It is understood, is it?"

"Oh, yes!" and Jones dashed upstairs to see the rich customer the boy had spoken about.

He met Mr. Upright, smiling and bowing.

"Ah—good afternoon, sir! What can I do for you to-day, sir?"

"Can you paint a good portrait?" the merchant asked.

"I think I can, sir," was the reply. "There are specimens of my work," and, pointing to a number of creditable paintings hanging against the walls, a light of pride gleamed in his eyes. He was an enthusiastic lover of his art.

"Those are very good," said the merchant. "I wanted a good one of myself painted. If you can paint one that will please me, your fortune is made, young man, provided you know how to manage a fortune."

"I've never had one to manage," said Jones, "but I wouldn't hesitate a moment to undertake the management of one."

The old merchant smiled and said, good-naturedly:

"You would find it more difficult to keep one than to make one, I guess—at least, I do. When can you give me a sitting?"

"At 10 o'clock to-morrow morning."

"I shall be promptly on hand;" and then, handing the artist a ten-dollar bill, said: "This means that I will come without fail. Don't have anybody else in the way;" and then he went away.

"That's the man I've been looking for these many years," said the delighted artist, dancing around the room, and blowing on the bill "for good luck," as though he was on the point of realizing a long-deferred ambitious dream.

## CHAPTER XXV.

### THE MINSTEEL AT WORK.

The reader will doubtless remember the visit of the senior member of the firm of Upright & Co. to the artist, and that he ordered him to paint his portrait for him.

The artist was overjoyed at the prospect of painting a picture for such a rich man—for the actions of the old merchant were calculated to make such an impression on his mind. He took the fee which had been placed in his hand and hurried across the street to see Harkins.

But Harkins was not in the saloon. He had gone away, resolved to see the artist again after supper, and complete his business with him. His absence, however, did not materially interfere with the mercurial artist's pleasures. He sat down to a table and called for a bottle of wine with a lordly air and proceeded to dispose of it all by himself.



While sitting there, getting mellow over his wine, Billy Dwyer, the minstrel, entered the saloon. He had a slight acquaintance with the famous singer and always liked those in the profession, because they were generally jolly fellows, and were also customers of his in many ways.

"Hello, Dwyer!" he called, as the minstrel looked over at him. "Come and have a whack at this bottle."

"Of course I will," said Billy, going over and shaking hands with him. "I like the shape of that bottle and the face of the man beside it," and, calling for another glass, he proceeded to demonstrate the truth of his assertions.

Jones was flattered.

Dwyer was the most popular minstrel in town, and one of the best fellows in the world; so in a few minutes he was the boon companion of the volatile artist and had him completely in charge.

When the bottle was finished Jones wanted to call for another, but Dwyer said:

"No, old fellow, let's wait till later, when I will put up. You see, I can't get full to-night till after the performance."

"Going to play to-night?"

"Yes, going to warble, you know. Go with me, and when it is over we'll make things howl. I'll deadhead you in."

"Governor," said Jones, extending his hand, "I weaken. I'll go."

"Good boy. Come downtown further and we'll have a good, square meal to commence on."

"Just wait till I run over to my shop and change clothes," said Jones, arising unsteadily on his feet.

"No need of waiting," said Dwyer. "I'll go with you, and then you will not have to come back here," and they both passed out together and crossed over to the shop, where they met Jared Harkins, who was just on the point of ascending the stairs.

"Hello, Harkins!" cried Jones, feeling good under the influence of the generous wine he had been drinking:

"I was just going up to see you. I want you to go to the theatre with me to-night."

"By George!" exclaimed Jones. "Why can't a fellow go to two places at once? Here I have agreed to go with my friend here to the minstrels. This is Billy Dwyer, the great minstrel—my friend Harkins," and the two were introduced in a twinkling. Harkins had read in the papers of Dick Duncan's arrest, in company with the famous minstrel, and Dwyer had been posted about Harkins by Dick after he had landed in the Tombs. Both shook hands and looked hard at each other, yet neither spoke a word.

"You can't go with me, then?" Harkins said.

"Well, no. I can't go to-night," was the hesitating reply.

"You will be in early to-morrow morning, will you not?" Harkins finally asked, a look of decided annoyance on his face.

"Oh, yes. I have an engagement to give a gentleman a sitting to-morrow morning."

"Then I will call early," said Harkins, bowing distantly to Dwyer and then turning away.

Jones led the way upstairs and Dwyer followed.

"Do you know anything about that man, Harkins?" Dwyer asked, as he seated himself in the reception-room of the artist.

"No—not much," was the reply. "Why do you ask?"

"Because I know him to be a very bad man," said Dwyer. "I'll wager you one thousand dollars that if you have anything to do with him, you will get into some kind of trouble."

"Why so?" and Jones glared at him in great surprise.

"Because every man who ever did have anything to do with him got into trouble. There's a strange fatality about the man that makes me shudder, whenever I think about him. There are many people in Swandown, upon the Hudson, who regard him as an omen of evil. He is a human serpent who charms and blasts his dearest friends. He does not seem to have evil intentions toward anyone, and, in fact, seems unconscious of any blame in the matter. But I was given the

names of over a dozen men, who either committed suicide or went to prison by reason of their dealings or intimacy with him."

"My God, Dwyer!" exclaimed Jones. "Are you telling me the truth?"

"Yes, as true as Gospel. You can ask anyone you please who knows anything about him. Do you owe him anything?"

"No—not a cent."

"Does he owe you anything?"

"No."

"Then I would advise you to cut his acquaintance in the most emphatic manner. Your business will go to ruin, or some other bad luck will be sure to follow if you have anything to do with him. Above all things, never let him call you as de for a few words in private when anyone else is present. That seems to be one of his omens of bad luck to everybody. Gently but firmly decline to give him a private interview, and also give him to understand that you don't want either him or his shadow around."

The astounded artist knew not what to say for a moment, and breathed hard as he glared at the famous minstrel. He had known Dwyer by sight and reputation for years. Harkins was a recent acquaintance.

"You have read the papers about that Dick Duncan, have you not?" Dwyer asked.

"Yes."

"Well, Duncan is a cousin to this man Harkins. They came down to the city together. Duncan had never tasted wine before in his life. He ran around town a few days with Harkins and now where is he? He is in the Tombs, and Harkins is running around in search of another victim. He must be the evil one in disguise."

Jones shuddered.

"I'll shake him," he said, "and never have anything more to do with him."

## CHAPTER XXVI.

### THE MYSTERIOUS ROBBERY.

Dwyer chuckled quietly to himself as Jones was preparing to go with him.

"I'll keep him away till it is too late for his game," he muttered, and the next moment the artist was ready to accompany him to a restaurant, where they were to take supper and then go to the minstrels.

As they went down on the street, Jared Harkins was on the other side watching them. Dwyer saw him, but managed to keep Jones from looking in that direction.

"Curses on him!" hissed Harkins, as he gazed after them down the street. "I believe that fellow is trying to keep him from me. I must see him at all hazards, and will do it, too, if I have to get that minstrel knocked on the head. It's too late now to go back. I'll follow it up and have Dick hung and reap the harvest in spite of all the drunken minstrels in the world."

He turned and followed them down the street and saw them enter the famous San Francisco minstrels theatre. He purchased a ticket and entered also. Dwyer happened to look around and see him.

"Oh-ho, my fine bird! You are shadowing us, are you? Well, I'll worry you some, anyhow," and then he proceeded to secure a private box, into which he placed Jones and locked the door.

"Now, old fellow," he said, "you can see and hear everything from here. Just keep your seat and don't let anybody in, no matter who knocks. I will come in as soon as the performance is over and then we'll make things howl—champagne and oysters."



Jones' mouth fairly watered at the prospect. His eyes brightened and his face beamed with the joy of expectation.

Dwyer left him and in a few minutes more was on the stage before the footlights, entrancing the audience with his singing. They greeted him with rapturous applause, and none more so than the enthusiastic artist himself.

A dark frown gathered on the face of Jared Harkins when he saw Dwyer lead Jones into the private box.

"That is to keep him away from me," he hissed through his clenched teeth. "But I will see him yet, and that before the rising of to-morrow's sun."

Taking up his hat he left the hall and was not seen again by Dwyer that night. As the time sped on Dwyer felt sure that Harkins had given up the effort to see Jones. But he little knew the man.

When the performance was over Dwyer hastened to the private box and rejoined the artist.

To a first-class restaurant and saloon combined they repaired and called for oysters and champagne.

They ate the oysters and drank the champagne with a relish that was both hearty and genuine.

When the champagne and oysters were disposed of they went out on the street, full enough of the spirit of adventure to go into any kind of scheme for fun or mischief.

Hour after hour passed, and at last, both as full of champagne as they could possibly be and yet keep in upright positions, they concluded to go to a hotel and take a room together. Dwyer had plenty of money, given him by the old merchant, and paid all the expenses of the spree.

At the hotel they were shown into a comfortable room, and in a few minutes they were sleeping the sleep of men of bibulous habits.

As usual with men who indulge deeply, Dwyer awoke early, and wanted a cocktail as an eye-opener.

He turned to call up Jones, and made the discovery that Jones was not in the bed with him.

"Hello!" he exclaimed, gazing around the room. "Has he gone for a drink and left me? That's a confounded mean way to treat a friend."

Getting up, he proceeded to dress himself as quickly as possible, hoping to catch the artist in the barroom.

But on pulling on his pants he suspected something wrong. Searching the pockets, he was astonished to find that every cent of over one hundred dollars which he had when he went to bed was gone.

"By the great bear!" he exclaimed, looking as blank as a whitewashed signboard, "I'm literally cleaned out—not a cent! Jones must be a practical joker, as well as a practical artist. It can't be that he means to rob me. It wouldn't pay him to do that. I'll go down and see how he has worked it." And, hastening down into the barroom, he was astonished at being told that the artist had not been in there that morning.

Dwyer looked blanker than ever. He concluded to go down to the saloon opposite his shop and see if he had been there.

But his search was in vain.

He could not find anything of him nor anybody who had seen him that morning.

"This is a queer joke, anyhow," said Dwyer, as he turned to go over to Jones' shop. He found the artist's boy assistant there waiting for him.

"Where's your boss?" he asked.

"Dunno, sir," was the lad's reply.

"Does he usually remain away late of mornings?"

"No, sir; allers on time."

Dwyer knew that the old merchant would be there at nine o'clock to have a sitting for his portrait, so he concluded to wait for him, though he was both very thirsty and hungry, not having a cent wherewith to purchase either a drink or breakfast.

Nine o'clock came and with it Mr. Upright.

"Mr. Jones hasn't come yet, boss," said the boy.

"Eh—what's that you say?"

Dwyer advanced and said:

"The artist hasn't come yet, he says."

"Ah—good morning, Mr. Dwyer!" greeted the old merchant. "Where did you leave him last night?"

Dwyer motioned to the old man to follow him and started off down the street. The merchant followed him and at the corner below Dwyer stopped and waited for him to come up.

"What's the matter?" the merchant asked.

"That's what I'd like to know myself," replied Billy. "I kept them apart last night, though Harkins followed us to the minstrels, and carried him to a hotel to sleep with me. We went to bed together. But this morning, when I awoke, I found both Jones and all my money gone."

"It is possible?"

"Yes, sir—not a penny in my pockets."

"That's strange—passing strange!" muttered the old merchant, as he led the way toward the hotel, followed by Dwyer.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

### THE TRIAL—VERDICT: "GUILTY!"

They entered the hotel and took a seat in the reading-room.

"This is very strange indeed," said the old man.

"I should say it was," added Billy. "I would not have believed that Jones would do a thing of that kind."

"Well, I don't believe he did it," said the merchant.

"The deuce!"

"No, I do not. He would not give up a five hundred dollar job to take one hundred, knowing that he would be found out. No, he has fallen into Harkins' hands and will be used against us."

Billy Dwyer gazed in amazement at the astute old merchant, and could not say a word. He was too much astonished even to think.

The old merchant merely looked at him and smiled.

"We have him in our power, though, if we can catch him. He won't dare to swear false even under Harkins' manipulation, for fear of going up for this robbery. Here is another hundred. I do not wish to appear in this phase of the work. Get your breakfast and then secure the best detective in the city to hunt up Jones. I will pay all expenses."

Dwyer took the money and went out to get a drink and a breakfast. When he had satisfied his hunger and thirst, he set out in search of a detective into whose hands he could put his case. He found Will Crolius, the famous detective, on Sixth avenue, and explained to him the case.

Crolius at once began a search for Harkins and had little difficulty in finding him. But that wily villain seemed to be intent only on business pertaining to the store of Harkins Brothers in Swandown.

Two days passed and still the absence of Jones remained a mystery. The fact of his absence was published in the city papers, and many of his erratic artistic friend became deeply interested in the case.

In the meantime Dick Duncan remained in the Tombs, where he was visited daily by his employer and Leonie Medill, as well as by faithful Billy Dwyer.

The grand jury met and found a true bill—indicting him for the murder of Ardell.

"They have indicted you, my boy," said honest old Jacob Upright, "but they have to try you before a jury before they can do anything with you. You will come out all right in the end. I know you are innocent."

The day of the trial came and a formidable array of legal talent was engaged on both sides. The friends of the dead politician were determined to secure a conviction at all hazards.



The prosecution introduced Hank Howard and the others who were with him at the time. Howard swore that the two men fell to the floor in the struggle, and that when the prisoner, Duncan, was pulled away, Ardell lay there with a knife to the hilt in his breast.

"Whose knife was it?" Duncan's lawyer asked.

"I don't know."

"Did you ever see it in the prisoner's possession?"

"No, sir."

"Did you see the prisoner stab Ardell?"

"No, sir."

"Did you see anybody else stab him?"

"No, sir."

"Could anybody else have done it?"

"I think not."

Other witnesses were called and with similar results.

At last Jared Harkins was called by the prosecution.

He took the witness stand and turned a vindictive glance in the direction of Duncan.

After telling his story he was cross-examined.

"Did you see the prisoner stab Ardell?"

"No, sir."

"That'll do," said the prisoner's lawyer.

"Hold on," said the prosecutor, as Harkins was about to step down from the witness stand. "Did you ever see this knife before the night of the killing?" exhibiting the knife that pierced Ardell's heart.

"Yes."

"Where did you see it?"

"I saw it several times in Dick Duncan's possession."

"Liar!" yelled Dick, springing to his feet in a burst of indignation.

"Order in court!" cried the sheriff, as the excitement arose to fever heat.

"He has perjured himself!" cried Dick, almost beside himself.

"Be quiet, Mr. Duncan," said his lawyer, and old Jacob Upright also added his entreaties to that of the counsel.

At last he sat down, but he kept his eyes on Harkins till he had finished his testimony.

The argument of counsel on both sides was able and powerful. But the testimony of Jared Harkins was too strong to be ignored by the jury, and the verdict was waited for with trembling anxiety by the friends of Dick Duncan.

At last the jury came in with a verdict of "guilty."

Leonie Medill gave a long wail of despair and fell fainting in the arms of Jacob Upright.

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

### THE TERRORS OF SUSPENSE.

The verdict was not unexpected, save by the immediate friends of the doomed man. The friends of the dead politician were in ecstasies. They had worked hard to bring about the result, and none was more rejoiced than Hank Howard, one of the witnesses for the prosecution.

When the excitement of the verdict had subsided, and Leonie Medill had been carried out in a dead faint, the sheriff tapped Dick on the shoulder and said:

"Come."

And strongly guarded by two deputies he arose, shook hands with his lawyers and Mr. Upright, and quietly followed the officers to the van outside, which was to carry him back to the Tombs.

But when he was taken back to his cell the kind-hearted sheriff pressed his hand and whispered, as a tear trembled on his eyelid:

"I am sorry for you."

"Thanks," was all poor Dick could say, as he sank down on the edge of the little cot.

He buried his face in his hands and tried to weep, but the tears would not come. They seemed to be utterly dried up and would not flow. He moaned as if his heart was broken.

"Oh, I am forsaken by all the world!" he moaned, rocking to and fro in an agony of distress.

How long he sat there is not known, for when the warden came in several hours later he found him lying unconscious on the floor.

The surgeon was called, who had him taken up and laid on the bed and administered restoratives to him. But it took two hours of hard work to bring him to.

"Poor fellow," said the kind-hearted warden. "It would be better for him if he never came to."

He came to finally, very weak and sick. He glared up at those around him and feebly asked:

"Was it a dream? Am I awake? Tell me—have I been dreaming?"

"You must keep very quiet," said the surgeon. "You have been very ill."

"But I am awake?" he eagerly asked.

"Yes, I think you are," was the reply.

"In the Tombs."

"Then it was not a dream. Oh, Leonie—Leonie! it will break your heart! but I am innocent—I am innocent!"

Every eye in the room was bathed in tears. Not one person but doubted the truth of the testimony against him.

"You will have a new trial," said the deputy sheriff, "and then your innocence will be established very clearly."

"How know you that?" he eagerly asked, looking up at the deputy.

"Your lawyers have asked for a new trial, believing that they can clear you before another jury," was the reply.

That was a glimmer of hope and he closed his eyes to think. The surgeon and the other officials left him alone with his thoughts again.

But he was so exhausted that he soon dropped off into a deep slumber, from which he did not awaken until his breakfast was brought in to him on the following morning.

"Here is some hot breakfast for you, Duncan," said the man who brought it.

"I can't eat; please give me some water," he said, arising on his elbow, and looking as woe-begone and despairing as was possible for any human being to look.

"You will feel much better if you will eat something—try some strong coffee;" and the man carried the cup to him.

Touched by the man's kindness, he took the cup and drank its contents. It did him much good, and soon he sat up and ate some of the breakfast.

"What is the sentence?" he suddenly asked, looking up at the man.

"You have not been sentenced," was the reply. "Your counsel will work hard for a new trial."

"But if he fails?"

"Then you will be sentenced."

"To what?"

"I don't know," and the man turned away his head. He could not look at the honest face of the doomed young man.

"Will it be death?"

"I—I—I don't know."

"Who does know—anybody?"

"The judge, I guess."

"When will my counsel be here?"

"I don't know—to-day, perhaps."

Dick ate his breakfast and then sat on the edge of his cot and asked himself a thousand questions.

Suddenly the door opened again and the warden ushered Billy Dwyer, the minstrel, into the cell.

"Duncan, old fellow!" exclaimed the warm-hearted minstrel, wringing Dick's hand. "You won't hang. I am on the track



of that scoundrel Harkins. He swore falsely and I'll fetch him yet."

"Too late, my good friend—too late!" said Dick, returning the pressure of his hand. "I am doomed. The blight of the bowl has fallen upon me and slain me. I have but one request to make of you, Dwyer—my dying request, you may consider it."

"What is it?"

"That you will take warning by my fate and shun wine forever."

"Now don't go to talking that way, Duncan," said Dwyer, trying to make him feel more cheerful. "If they hang you I will reform and be a good fellow, but if we beat 'em I'll get off on one of the biggest drunks ever heard of since old Noah's time."

"Don't jest with me, Dwyer," said Dick, reproachfully.

"No, I won't, but just you wait and see if we don't fetch up with those fellows," and thus he talked to encourage him, though he had but little hope himself.

## CHAPTER XXIX.

### SOME FINE DETECTIVE WORK.

The efforts of counsel to procure a new trial were utterly futile. The dead politician was a strong friend of the judges and had a host of friends who were determined to bring his murderer, as they believed Duncan to be, to justice.

The lawyers were astounded at the positive aversion the judges had toward granting a new trial, but could do nothing. They were forced to admit that nothing more could be done, and a day was set for him to be brought into court and receive sentence.

"Duncan, my boy," said the senior counsel, "you may prepare for the worst; I have done all in my power. There remains but one hope and that is the governor."

"The governor will do nothing," said Mr. Upright, shaking his head. "The friends of Ardell have got him in their interest. Oh, Dick, my dear boy, I have loved you as a son. I believe you will die an innocent man," and the old merchant broke down completely, sobbing like a child.

"I am not afraid to die," said Dick, bravely. "I have done no wrong except in being led off into drinking. The man who has sworn my life away was the one who first led me astray. I only regret that I shall die the death of a criminal. The shadow will never be lifted from my reputation, as the truth, if ever fully found out, can never repair the mischief."

"Your friends will ever believe you innocent, my dear boy," said the old merchant.

"Yes, I know; but my enemies will taunt them and call me infamous. I thank God that my parents are dead. But for you and Leonie, I could bear it better."

He was carried into court on the following day and sentenced to be hanged in two months from that date.

When he was carried back to the Tombs he was placed in the cell allotted to the condemned, which was stronger and more gloomy than the other. It was there that Leonie Medill found him when the old merchant brought her to see him again.

This interview was heartrending, and for the first time Dick himself broke down and wept like a child, as did old Jacob Upright also.

"Leonie," he said, when they were more composed, "you must not come here again. This dismal place, and the horrors surrounding me here, will injure your health and forever blight your spirits. You must take a final farewell and leave me to my fate."

"No—no—no!" she almost shrieked. "I will not leave you! I will die with and be buried with you!" and she threw herself weeping on his breast.

He was unmanned for the moment and knew not what to do. But he recovered and insisted on her not coming to the Tombs again. She would not promise, however, and went away at the end of an hour, resolved to work day and night to ascertain who the guilty one was.

When at her hotel and recovered from the shock, she sent for Billy Dwyer and Crolius, and asked them if they were willing to throw all their time into the work if well paid for it.

They both answered in the affirmative and then she said:

"I will pay you both; go to work and follow that Hank Howard and Jared Hawkins day and night, and see what you can do with them. They must know who struck that fatal blow."

They set out and Crolius, being an experienced detective, soon had Howard under surveillance. He kept on his shadow like a Nemesis who never slept.

Everywhere that he went the detective was there also, but the wily sport never dreamed of it. He and Harkins often met and discussed the incidents of the trial while Crolius was near by.

While he could not hear enough to warrant him in making an arrest, he did hear enough to convince him that they knew enough to save Dick Duncan from an ignominious death.

"By heavens!" muttered the detective, "they hold that young man's life in their hands. They know he is innocent, yet will not save him. I'll keep on and see if I can't get a grip on them some way."

And he did keep on—day and night, resting only when his game rested, yet kept his identity completely hidden.

Billy Dwyer was known to both Harkins and Hank Howard, and they knew that he was a faithful friend to Dick Duncan, hence they studiously avoided him. Under these circumstances the work devolved upon Crolius.

But one evening Dwyer was disguised and took a seat near the two worthies. They were drinking wine and felt quite talkative.

"Have you seen Jones to-day?" Howard asked.

"No, but I heard from him," was Harkins' reply.

"He is all right, eh?"

"Yes—but is restless. I don't think it would be safe ever to turn him loose again."

"Then fix him."

"Just what I am thinking."

Dwyer pricked up his ears and took it all in. The artist was evidently somewhere in the city and would make his appearance after the hanging of Duncan. He lost no time in posting Crolius, and that shrewd detective opened wide his eyes.

"Just the clew I wanted, Billy," he said, rubbing his hands in great glee. "I'll fetch 'em in less than a week, or my name is not Will Crolius!"

He watched his men more closely than ever and at last saw that they were preparing to go to a certain private lunatic asylum. He overheard them mention the name of the place and knew intuitively that the artist had been carried there under some pretence or other, and would be held there until his freedom would be no longer dangerous to their plans.

"I'll get a warrant for his arrest for robbing Dwyer," said Crolius; and for that purpose he took Dwyer before a justice and had him make an affidavit of the robbery, on which a warrant was issued and placed in the hands of Crolius.

"Now, Billy," he said, "time is short. Duncan will hang tomorrow, unless we can get that artist and see what his testimony is worth. It will save poor Duncan, else they wouldn't keep him out of the way. Get your revolver and come with me. We'll go up the Bloomingdale road and see what we can find out at a certain asylum there."

"Are you sure you are taking the right step, Crolius?" Billy asked.

"Yes, I am quite sure. At least I am willing to risk it, anyhow."



"Well, you know your business best. I will go wherever you lead."

"Good boy. Come along and we'll see if we've made any mistake. If Harkins has sworn falsely I am the man to help send him for a long term to Sing Sing."

Night came and the two men departed on their mission, desperate in their resolution to do something to save an innocent man's life.

### CHAPTER XXX.

#### SAVED—CONCLUSION.

The time had come when Dick Duncan was to perish on the scaffold.

But a few hours more of life remained to him and the ministers and friends were with him.

He had been listening to the building of the gallows on the outside of his cell and every blow had fallen like a death-knell on his heart.

His counsel had come to take leave of him and listened to his last requests. He had declared that his sacrifice was nothing more than the blight of the bowl, as the reader has already read in the prologue of this story, when the sheriff came in and said:

"Come, everything is ready."

"I am ready," said Dick, and then, gazing at his senior counsel, exclaimed again: "It is the blight of the bowl!" and staggered forward into his arms.

The sheriff led the way out of the cell and Duncan, now nerved for the worst, followed with head erect, lips compressed and face as pale as marble.

"Make way there! Make way there in the name of God and justice!" cried a stern voice, and the crowd of officials who had crowded around the gallows to witness the execution, gave way.

Will Crolius rushed forward and laid the bleeding body of Hank Howard at the foot of the gallows.

"There is the real murderer—Duncan is innocent!" he cried. "Give him some brandy to revive him up and he'll tell all about it if not too late. Here—brandy or water here, quick!"

Such an interruption at an execution was never seen before. The excited spectators crowded around to see who the wounded man was.

"Stand back, men!" sternly ordered the head physician, and the crowd surged back.

The physician knelt down and took Howard's head in his lap. Water and brandy were given him and he opened his eyes and groaned.

"What's the matter?" the physician asked of him.

"I am dying!" groaned the wretch. "Shot to death by Crolius, the detective."

"That's true as gospel," said Crolius, nodding his head. "But had you been as good a shot as I am, I would have been dead, too, eh, wouldn't I?"

"Yes—I don't blame you—water!"

Water was given him, which seemed to revive him somewhat. But he pressed his hand against his side and seemed to be in great pain.

"Better tell what you have already told me and Dwyer," said Crolius, leaning over the dying man.

"Yes—Duncan is innocent," said the man.

"Great God!" exclaimed the senior counsel of Duncan, springing forward and kneeling by Howard's side. "Undo your testimony before it is too late!"

"I was with Ardell when he was killed," said Howard, talking with great difficulty. "I drew my knife and rushed in to stab Duncan. I made a mistake and stabbed Ardell, for it was my knife which was found in his breast."

"Thank God!" exclaimed a dozen voices at once.

"You always carried that knife?" the counsel asked.

"Yes."

"Harkins had never seen it?"

"No."

The spectators yelled with excitement and rushed forward to congratulate Duncan.

"What must I do?" the sheriff asked, turning to the warden of the prison.

"Put him back into the cell and notify the judge," was the reply.

He was led back into the cell.

"Let me tell Howard I forgive him?" he asked.

He was conducted to the spot where Howard's life blood was fast ebbing away.

"Howard," he said, kneeling and taking his hand in his, "I forgive you from the bottom of my heart. May God also forgive you."

A faint smile lit up the features of the dying man and in another moment he gasped, shuddered and was dead.

"Crolius—Crolius!" cried the excited crowd. "Tell us about it!"

The daring detective mounted a box in the prison-yard and said:

"I was employed to hunt up the missing link in this case, and I found it. That artist Jones had been spirited away, and put into a private asylum out on the Bloomingdale road to keep him from testifying in the case. I suspected that his testimony was important and so set to work to find out his hiding place. Billy Dwyer overheard Howard and Harkins talking and we got a clew from them. I got a warrant and went out to the asylum after midnight. Harkins and Howard were there. I produced the warrant and demanded the body of Jones. The keeper was scared. But Howard and Harkins ordered me out. I wouldn't go for a cent, and a fight resulted; Billy and I cleaned 'em out, Harkins took wings and flew away and Howard went down as you see. He told the thing straight to Billy and me, and we saw at once that we ought to bring him here at once in order to save poor Dick. We took a small wagon and put him in, and I drove like the devil, leaving Billy to take care of Jones—I got here in time, thank God."

"Three cheers for Crolius!" yelled one of the crowd, and they were given with a will.

Leonie was lying in her room at the hotel almost in the agonies of death herself when the news came to her.

She sprang to her feet and cried, laughed, sang and acted like one out of her head. Mr. Upright came in and she read the good news in his happy face. She flew to him and kissed him a dozen times.

In due time the judge ordered his release and he joined Leonie at the hotel, where they were at once married, and went back to Swandown. They were received with cannon and a regular Fourth of July celebration.

Jared Harkins was arrested and sent to prison for twenty years for perjury.

Billy Dwyer celebrated his release by a big drunk. He is now one of the lights of the church, and as popular as he ever was as a minstrel.

Crolius is still a detective, with his headquarters on Sixth avenue, in New York city, where he is a terror to evildoers.

Dick Duncan is now a prosperous merchant in Swandown, the husband of the happiest woman in the world, and the father of three as pretty children as can be found in a day's journey. He has never forgotten his experience with strong drink, and is now one of the strongest temperance men in the country. To this day the people speak of his career as a strange one and call his misfortune: "THE BLIGHT OF THE BOWL."

THE END.

Read "DARING DAN, THE PRIDE OF THE PE-DEE," which will be the next number (84) of "Pluck and Luck."



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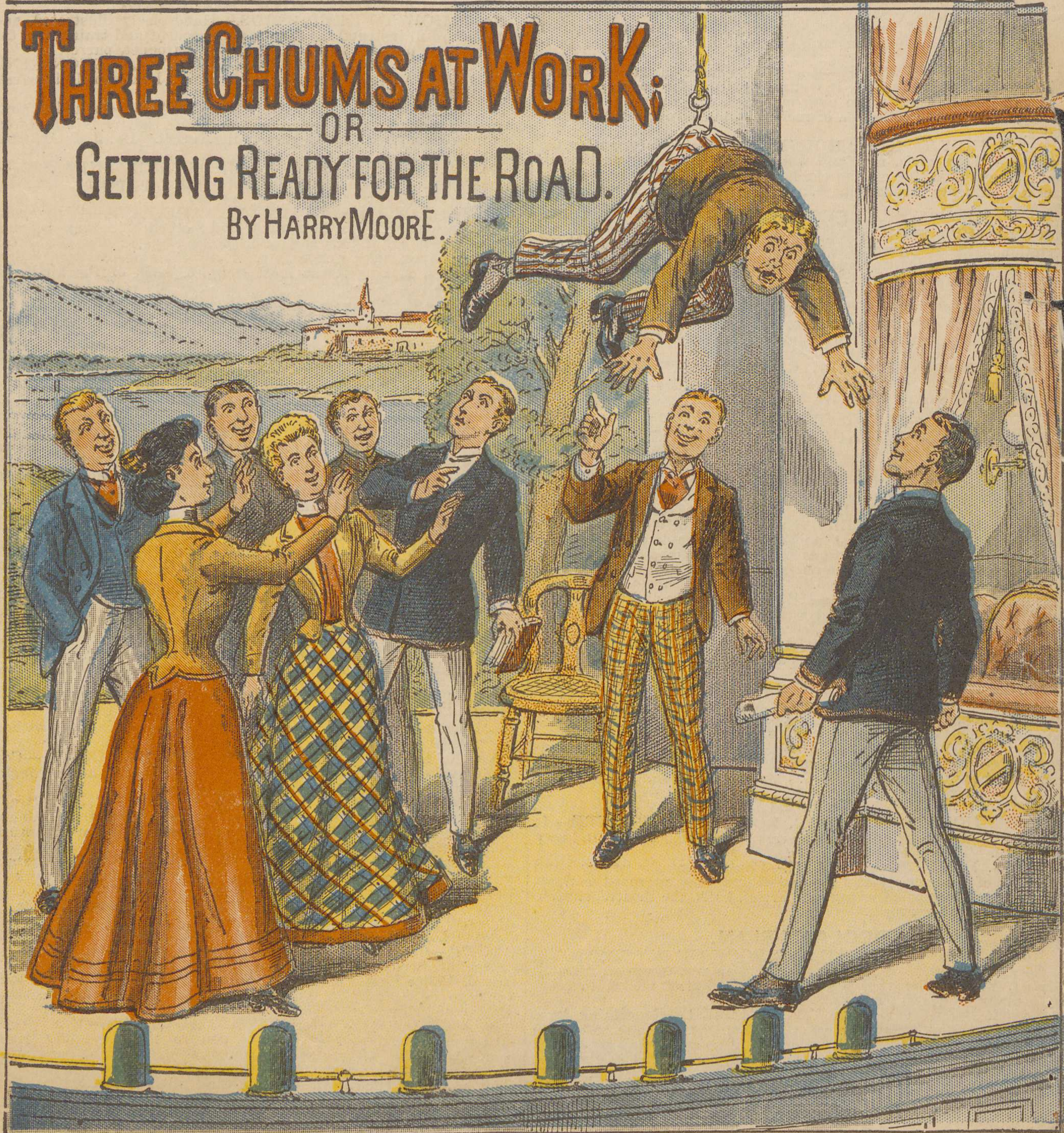
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Patsy gave a signal, and the scene shifter in the loft hove away at the windlass, and hoisted Oglethorpe, kicking and struggling, five feet into the air. "Shure, an' thot's phwat yez git fur thryin' to make mashes on dhe gurrils insthid av attindin' to dhe sp'akin' av your pieces, 'begorra!" muttered Patsy in huge delight.